

RESPONDING TO NON-NATIVE WRITERS IN BASIC WRITING CLASSES

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by  
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## ABSTRACT

### RESPONDING TO NON-NATIVE WRITERS IN BASIC WRITING CLASSES (May 2010)

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This study discusses how to best respond to non-native writers in Basic Writing classes in order to achieve the most effective learning outcomes. Beginning with an overview concerning how to respond to Basic Writers in general and more specifically non-native writers, the paper then focuses on theories concerning the social aspect of language. Intertwining Contrastive Rhetoric with Mikhail M. Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia provides valuable guidelines by which instructors may respond to non-native writers in Basic Writing classes. A primary goal is to encourage the development of higher order discourse concerns, or rhetoric, rather than focusing on correcting lower order concerns, or mechanical issues, taking into account process writing theory. A basic premise of this paper is that effective communication in writing goes beyond linguistic rules and includes culturally conditioned thought processes that instructors should recognize and address.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents and my brother without whom I would not be here, and to my wife who has made my continued study possible.

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## INTRODUCTION

I first became interested in how best to respond to non-native writers (NNW) of English while I was teaching in China. During the seven years I was in the Middle Kingdom, I taught every age and language level from pre-school children learning their ABCs to post-graduate English majors working on dissertations as well as middle-aged businessmen and women interested in writing reports for international companies. I also taught in every venue from international schools and business institutes to public universities with classes of over seventy students as well as one-on-one tutoring and in virtually every type of location from small, remote villages such as Baoshan, to the capitol Beijing. A common thread in all these situations is that the NNW focused on sentence level and grammatical concerns to the detriment of larger rhetorical issues. Regardless of how proficient the students were with the linguistic aspects of English, something was missing from their writing that made it sound unnatural and awkward to native readers. Effective communication involves more than just correct grammar, which changes over time, as anyone who has read Chaucer or Shakespeare can attest, but also involves unspoken, or unwritten, nuances within the shared readership communities.

I noticed while teaching literature in China to post-graduate English majors that they missed a lot of the meaning and nuances of the language due to limited exposure and understanding of western culture. Much language use assumes the readers share certain elements of knowledge, and skilled authors craft the syntax and utilize this shared information as a base in order to communicate most effectively to the readers. Without this common cultural knowledge, or literacy, the text is relatively dead and meaningless

to foreign readers, and if they cannot fully appreciate literature written in English, then their own writing abilities will suffer. Even if I 'explained' the connotations in English, it meant little to the non-native readers because the cultural implications had not been absorbed and did not actually play a part in shaping their identities. After returning to America to study and teach, I facilitated a Basic Writing class at Appalachian State University during the fall semester of 2008 and had one Japanese student in my class. I realized that he struggled with the same clash of cultural issues in his writing as did my Chinese students on the mainland. In order to ascertain remedies for this situation, I began my research with E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* in which he asserts that authors assume readers to possess a certain amount of prior knowledge or information in order to write effectively. In fact, authors *must* depend on readers sharing some cultural knowledge that is not explicitly stated in order to communicate even at a basic level. Hirsch provided motivation, as his ideas are in sync with my personal experience. My experience has confirmed that a key barrier to proficient second language acquisition among the NNW is their lack of shared cultural understandings that are common knowledge to native English speakers. For example, one would be hard-pressed to find a native born American who is not familiar with the stories concerning George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and could immediately identify with implied meanings associated with allusions to these characters. Also, issues such as the importance of the individual over the state are commonly shared assumptions among Americans, with freedom as *the* most important value in society. Many cultures, such as contemporary China, do not consider personal or civic freedom as the pinnacles of civilization that Americans do. Values such as filial piety or harmony between heaven

and earth are much more important than freedom to certain cultures. NNW have a severe disadvantage to NW concerning access to the dominant form of the English language, so the cultural aspect, or lack thereof, should be taken into account when interacting with NNW. Hirsch's work is important in that it further buttresses the fact that language and communication involve much more than simply linguistic rules. However, I needed more scholarly work in linguistics and composition studies to supplement the basic premise concerning the importance of shared cultural information between authors and readers.

Since composition issues with my students seemed to go beyond the language and into actual thought processes which lie deeper within the culture, I referred to Robert Kaplan's "Cultural Thought Patterns" and his theory of Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) as well as Mikhail M. Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia concerning how an individual experiences his or her ideological becoming through centripetal and centrifugal linguistic forces. I discuss other voices concerning CR, especially developments in the field since Kaplan's original article appeared in 1966, and refer to Lev S. Vygotsky in relation to Bakhtin, as both encourage a multi-voiced, socially constructed view of language and literature which supports CR in the context of composition studies. This multi-voiced, heteroglossic nature of language is especially applicable to NNW as they engage the English language from a very radical Other perspective. Rather than force NNW into the dominant discourse, I recommend interactions, or heteroglossic multiple dialogues, between the NNW rhetorics and that of Standard American English (SAE). Rhetoric is a very complex field that is constantly in flux, not only between different cultures, but at different times within the same cultures. The greatest need I perceive in the composition field is among NNW that are placed in Basic Writing (BW) classes upon entering

American institutions of higher learning. Instructors in mainstream BW classes need additional training concerning how best to address NNW in their classes. I do not believe instructors intentionally isolate NNW, but due to the lack of experience many instructors have dealing with students from various cultures makes responding to NNW writers extremely challenging.

A crucial learning tool in BW classes is feedback given by the instructor during the drafting of papers. According to Mina Shaughnessy, comments on graded papers have little to no effect on student learning (*Errors and Expectations* 84). My personal experience confirms this fact as students seldom, if ever, even read my comments on final papers as their only interests are in the grades. As Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell state, there is a difference between evaluation and grading. Grading is a final judgment about how well one has written a particular piece of writing while evaluation can happen throughout the writing process (viii). The aspect of evaluation with which I am concerned is formative comments given by instructors on different drafts throughout the writing process. I strongly promote process pedagogy and am convinced that weaving together concepts of CR and heteroglossia strengthens how instructors respond to NNW in BW classes.

First, I present an overview of Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia and theories regarding the social aspect of language. Then I provide scholarly advice on responding to native English speakers who are BW. Next, I submit ideas on how to respond to NNW in BW classes while elaborating on CR. To illustrate the research, I include a case study examining writing samples from a previous NNW student in my BW class. The conclusion involves a summary of my findings and suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER 1: HETEROGLOSSIA AND THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF LANGUAGE

Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Lev S. Vygotsky, and other theorists who promote the social aspect of language provide valuable insights that are beneficial to BW instructors who encounter NNW in their classes. Theories concerning responding to native English language writers (NW) in BW classes offer a framework from which perceptions on how to respond to NNW in BW classes may be expanded. The gist of the argument centers around how to appreciate reciprocal contributions between SAE and NNW rather than promoting the idea that NNW should totally conform to SAE.

In my experience, the vast majority of English instructors overseas appropriate, or take over, the students' papers and saturate them with their own ideas concerning revision. Another key problem is that these same instructors focus an inordinate amount of time and effort responding to superficial mechanical errors, or lower order concerns (LOC), to the neglect of higher order concerns (HOC) such as cohesion, organization, development or focus, and they punish for errors when often errors are indications of improvement and attempts at more sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structures. A punitive attitude towards mistakes, or non-standard grammar, discourages students and trains them to believe that written language is simply a set of rules to be memorized. Often, instruction in their native countries stress to NNW that they need to learn to write, but seldom are they informed that they also need to write to learn and that written communication is a very complicated process that transcends linguistic systems.

Mikhail M. Bakhtin in "Dialogic Imagination" argues that the novel is not one genre among many, but is *the* mode through which all other forms of expression are

realized, which he calls the novelization of literature (330). He goes on to discuss how one cannot examine the stylistics of the novel, except as multi-vocal interactions.

According to Bakhtin, novels are interactions, or dialogues between, differing styles, which he terms heteroglossia. Bakhtin does not view language as simply grammatical structures, but as ideological expressions working towards centralization through tensions between centripetal (institutional) and centrifugal (unofficial) utterances in communication with each other, which gives rise to a multiplicity of voices within a text. The centripetal forces are authoritative while the centrifugal are people's 'internally persuasive' discourses, which involve "what is ultimately persuasive to the individual, determining the development of their ideologies" (344). For Bakhtin, language is not a system of abstract forms, but is a concrete mix of various conceptions of the world. This concept is crucial in relation to how instructors respond to NNW writing as students develop their worldviews, or experience what Bakhtin terms 'ideological becoming', to a significant degree through writing. While composing, students interact with their own texts and ideas, often while reading and interpreting texts written by experts, so through these interactions between ideas and negotiations of meanings, the students modify their own identities, or ideological becoming. Bakhtin regards 'ideology' as the body of ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of an individual, group, class or culture (347). Internally persuasive dialogues, which are critical to ideological becoming, are denied privilege and often are not recognized at all by the authoritative mainstream discourse. As Arnetha Ball points out in *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy and Learning*, because individuals are immersed within particular discourses, the choices one makes concerning how to communicate shared information determines one's identity. Even

choosing what to include and what to leave out in an argument paper has personal identity implications. Instructors can present a view of language that is heteroglossic, or multi-voiced, in order to help NNW reshape the social relations that exist between language, culture, and the 'Other' as they experience ideological becoming in an alien environment. For example, instructors can develop in-class exercises to demonstrate social language and help dispel the romantic myth that the muse only inspires a lucky few to write effectively, usually as isolated geniuses. One simple way to accomplish this is to demonstrate how the same text can have multiple interpretations. Stanley Fish's reader response theory brings to mind the heteroglossic aspect of language and helps students understand that meaning does not reside in the text, but through interactions between texts and readers.

Caryl Emerson in "Outer Word and Inner Speech: Bakhtin, Vygotsky, and the Internalization of Language" points out that since Bakhtin argues that speech and writing are social constructs, then meaning is not acquired through the inner soul, but through the objective ideologies one experiences (23). Instead of viewing individuals as against society, Bakhtin believes individuals are unique biological specimens within a group. According to Bakhtin, "each dialect reflects and embodies a set of values and a sense of shared experience" (24). For Bakhtin, the Word, or *logos*, in essence means 'discourse', and words cannot exist apart from the voices of their speakers. The difference between a spoken and dictionary word is described by Bakhtin as a distinction between theme and meaning. While theme involves the upper linguistic significance, meaning inhabits the lower. Bakhtin argues that concrete situations which produce spoken words are the themes and are therefore superior linguistic units than dictionary meanings, or

vocabulary. The dictionary word, or ‘meaning’, is in effect ‘meaningless’ without the upper linguistic theme and concrete situation which speak to a broader context. A lexical reference only possesses the *potential* to have significance within a concrete theme. Bakhtin falls between the two poles of extreme Cartesian objectivism, which places language as separate from its interpreters and the Humboldtian subjectivism which places meaning too much within the individual. In fact, every individual forms horizontal relationships with other individuals through speech acts and vertical relationships between the outer world and his or her own psyche. The individual psyche is not separated from the outer world and language, but partakes in the social aspect of discourse. A key point for Bakhtin is that people do not accept their native languages, but it is through their native languages that people first become aware. As outer, social speech becomes inner speech, individual personalities are formed through the navigation of ideological themes until they derive a unique voice, or accent. Thus, it is impossible for the individual psyche to truly experience the world without social dialogue.

Lev Vygotsky, a contemporary of Bakhtin, focused on language as the defining aspect of humanity and rejected isolated, controlled experiments to test his theories because language involves interaction within the real world. Like Bakhtin, Vygotsky believed that external society is the starting point of individual consciousness. He points out that before the age of two, language serves human children much like a thirty-two word vocabulary does a chimpanzee. The child does not have a vocabulary, but only emotional vocalization and some gestures to communicate, but no real intellectual activity takes place. When the child passes out of this stage, he or she begins to ask for the names of objects and it is at this point that “thought becomes verbal and speech



becomes rational” (*Mind in Society* 29). Vygotsky developed four stages of the internalization of outer speech: natural (pre-intellect), naïve psychology, egocentric speech and ingrowth. The third, egocentric stage, is the most important concerning the internalization of outer speech. It is at this stage that children often ‘talk to themselves’ and do so twice as often when presented with objects. Vygotsky experimented with children in this stage by placing them in different environments, such as in a room with deaf mutes or extremely loud music, and discovered that egocentric speech dropped significantly when the child did not have a social environment in which to ‘talk to him/herself’. These studies strongly suggest that children do not externalize internal speech, but internalize external interactions. By age seven, egocentric speech is all but unavailable to children because thought has already become inner speech.

As one continues to adjust to the world and engage in adult social speech, other systems become internalized and one develops a personal language, or voice. For Vygotsky, “one makes a self through the words one has learned, fashions one’s own voice and inner speech by a selective appropriation of the voices of others” (31). For example, when ‘reciting by heart’, the original speaker has authority, but one cannot enter into dialogue with the language. It is dead. Yet, when re-telling a story in one’s own words, something original transpires and in Bakhtinian terms, one enters into ‘internally persuasive’ dialogue, which is as close to being ‘on our own’ as possible. The tension between authoritative and internally persuasive voices is where intellectual and moral growth is realized. When responding to NNW, instructors can keep in mind that students are constantly struggling between authoritative voices and their own internally persuasive dialogues in order to encourage original re-telling in their own words. This can be

accomplished through requiring summaries of scholarly books and articles. Many students, especially NNW, have trouble writing effective summaries and translating others' words into their own. Instructors need to take the time to give feedback and guide students concerning how to truly take others' concepts and flavor them with originality. According to Vygotsky, the ability to re-tell in one's own words is as close to genuine, original language that is possible because language acquisition begins in infancy through outside forces.

James Britton in *Literature in its Place* investigates how children acquire and develop language abilities and move from what he calls *spiels*, or reciting phrases from memorization more for entertainment than communication, to logical conversation. He discusses the tensions between internal and external speech, which is synonymous with Bakhtin's centripetal and centrifugal forces. Britton argues that imagination arises out of experience rather than vice-versa and that make-believe enactments and nonsensical nursery rhymes are healthy developments in children's abilities to distinguish and classify reality and in fact foster the capacity for future creativity. Adults enjoy art in much the same way that children enjoy make-believe as "art presents modified, even distorted, views of reality...strengthening the viewer's conception of reality while exploring *what it might become*. Art is a method for building life" (8). He refers to Vygotsky's *The Psychology of Art*, indicating that art drives us into the future and encourages us to go beyond our immediate lives. Britton discusses the evaluative nature of expressions and agrees with Bakhtin that language is social and states, "my choice will come to influence what counts as my experience in the social group to which I belong" (9) and "an isolated self can truly be said to be only an abstraction" (8). Individual speech

is a selective process influenced by biological, psychological and social aspects and, as one's understanding of the world changes, so does one's personal speech, or what Bakhtin terms *internally persuasive dialogue*. Britton uses memories and influences of deceased family members to elaborate on his notion of how human evaluative needs find expression in language. He specifically refers to a suicide note as an example of "the highly sophisticated and influential expression we cannot fail to recognize as literature" (10). Britton explains that not every heartfelt cry is literature, but emotions do play a significant, functional part in language. He relates a story of his waking one morning to birds singing in glimmering sunlight and wishing to share the experience with family members he has outlived. He defines the separation between himself and the deceased as a time scale rather than severance because "what had survived them as legacy made up a great part of my environment" (10), and, I argue a great part of his ideological becoming and internally persuasive dialogue. Living with memories of, instead of actual contact with, deceased family members inevitably influences how Britton communicates and by extension, the evaluative nature of his linguistic choices.

How group association and individuality interact for unique understandings and expressions when exposed to identical information can be illustrated through songs. For example, when I hear a song that was among the top 10 when I was in high school, it evokes memories of a certain individual I knew at that time. However, although virtually everyone in America is familiar with the same song, very few, and most likely *none*, of them think of the same person that I do when I hear these particular chords and lyrics. In this way, how I associate my experiences becomes original identification, but lacks significance without participation in the larger group of shared understanding, which in

this case is everyone in the world who has ever heard this particularly popular song.

Likewise, NNW associate and express their experiences in, sometimes radically, different ways than NW. The meaning is unique, but must connect to the group, or readership community, in order to acquire significance and accomplish genuine communication.

According to Britton, literature is one venue that responds to humanity's evaluative needs and facilitates the merging of the conscious and unconscious processes of art by allowing subconscious expressions to be consciously shared with society. Rhetoric sets up limits for acceptable forms of expression. For example, the musical form of a song is different from the grammatical structures of the lyrics (84). The difference lies in the purposes of the communication. Britton does not believe any word is neutral or free from emotional and evaluative content. Regardless of how intellectual our communication, "there is always in some degree an indication of how we feel about someone or something; our words carry...the pluses and minuses of our verdicts upon the world" (86). Imagination, expressed through literature (or composition class), allows us to invent the impossible as we share "images that reflect our unspoken judgments of reality" (92). The NNW unspoken judgments of reality can be appreciated and interact with NW's judgments of reality as expressed in the composition classroom. An example of unspoken judgment of reality can be illustrated through the foundational differences in philosophical outlooks.

To provide a more detailed, specific example, I will examine fundamental underlying differences between Chinese and western philosophies. Mao Luming in "Searching for the Way: Between the Whats and Wheres of Chinese Rhetoric" discusses how rhetoric is influenced by a key difference between western and Chinese

philosophical thought. While western thought asks “*what* is the truth?” Chinese thinkers ask “*where* is the way?” The western ‘what’ question constitutes a cultural approach that comprehends reality as “a catalog of facts and principles that assist one in taking an inventory of the world” (330). In my opinion, this approach also results in the strong objectification of the sciences, arts and history, regarding them as items to be broken down into their constituent parts, analyzed and examined. According to Mao, the Chinese ‘where’ question perceives no absolutes but is concerned with immediacy of experience and interconnectedness and “Confucianism is not an isolatable doctrine or the commitment to a certain belief structure, but is in fact the continuing narrative of a community of people---the center of an ongoing ‘way’ or *dao*” (332). These underlying philosophical influences in western and Chinese societies play a significant role in what is considered ‘good’ writing within a particular context and have personal identity implications as well. Regardless of whether rising from a Confucian or Platonic background, ethos, or credibility, is crucial to effective written communication.

Goncalves in *Sexuality and the Politics of Ethos in the Writing Classroom* discusses how individuals shape their ethos, or credible identities, to communicate in writing. This text deals more with gay and lesbian identity issues and how they navigate within heteronormativity, or the dominant heterosexual culture that considers itself ‘normal’, but many of the concepts may be applied to NNW navigating their identities within an alien culture. The aim of this book is “to help students in my writing classrooms to negotiate their multiple identities and create agency in shaping rhetorical situations” (86). Likewise, I want to help NNW navigate BW classes which are an introduction to the dominant, SAE academic culture. Laura R. Micciche in “Contrastive

Rhetoric and the Possibility of Feminism” continues in this vein as she discusses how SAE has become synonymous with wealth and power and how NNW are often discriminated against in the language classroom. Micciche argues that CR focusing only on second-language learning (L2) situations is limiting as it stresses the *contrasting* to the detriment of the *rhetorical* aspect of writing. Utilizing feminist principles to CR, Micciche discusses how the teachers’ and the students’ cultural identities are more important than the assignments given in writing instruction classes and that applications of CR in L1 classes can be beneficial as they carry over to L2 classes. The teacher’s identity, including aspects such as race, gender, class, status, native language, sexuality, political leanings, to name a few, influence the choices made by the teacher. Micciche refers to a teacher’s classroom identity as his or her cultural-rhetorical location and focuses on how the dynamics of power in the classroom are changed when a non-white NNW as opposed to a white NW is facilitating the lessons: “A pedagogical theory is a way of positioning oneself in relation to others, so a pedagogy also refers to the process of socialization that instruct teachers on how to position themselves in classrooms” (83) resulting in usually unstated expectations of acceptable classroom behavior, which varies according to background, ethnicity and other cultural factors that form teacher identity. A key point Micciche makes is that focusing on students’ linguistic differences while neglecting teachers’ differences in identities is a mistake, indicating that it is important to address the construction of the relationships between teachers and students and how their identities interact in the classroom.

Jonathan Alexander in *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy*, engages the individual identities of gays and lesbians, providing valuable information that can be utilized in this

study of responding to NNW. For example, the concept of ‘gender performance’ can be applied to how NNW communicate in an alien rhetorical situation and what they must do to subscribe to the norm. Alexander discusses the social and political forces that come into play shaping rhetorical constructs and utilizes the term ‘intersectionality’ to describe the relationships between the self and competing ideologies. The same principles of ‘intersectionality’ apply to NNW communicating within a western socio-political system as NNW ideologies compete with SAE in academia. Mark McBeth in “The Queen’s English” discusses Gaylect, or the idiomatic language used by the community of gay men, and compares Gaylect to NNW learning a new discourse as they interact with the dominant culture. “Like the English-as-a-second-language learner, the Gay man’s rhetorical choices indicate distinct attributes of his cultural affiliation and engender certain responses” (106). However, unlike the Gay rhetorical choices, which often involve purposely engaging political entities, NNW choices are usually unconscious. Also, Gaylect is primarily spoken while NNW deal with written discourse. McBeth refers to Bakhtin’s *Dialogic Imagination* for support and the Russian scholar’s idea of how tensions between centripetal and centrifugal forces influence an individual’s ideological becoming, or identity.

As ethos, or credibility, is crucial for both students and instructors in any rhetorical situation, how each individual teacher interacts within each particular classroom is of paramount importance, especially concerning NNW in BW classes. According to Micciche, Alexander and McBeth, identities, or subjectivities, are not fixed or essential, but are in constant flux and are under continuous formation. I believe the most significant identity construction arises through linguistic intercourse, dialogue and

heteroglossia and as Mike Rose indicates in *Lives on the Boundary*, classrooms are the places where the dynamics of society play out. Therefore, instructors should make a conscious effort to be aware of how easy it is to promote, and virtually force the dominant discourse into the classroom, thereby silencing the students' unique, centrifugal voices. Instructor ethos involves building trust. Student ethos involves developing one's self into a more mature, well-rounded individual able to enter into meaningful dialogues prevalent within a pluralistic democracy. In this way, with credibility at the forefront, identity construction assumes a positive mask, or persona, that can navigate multiple discourses within and beyond academia.



## CHAPTER 2: RESPONDING TO WRITERS

### Responding to Basic Writers

C.W. Griffin in “Theory of Responding to Student Writing: The State of the Art” argues that New Criticism still influences how instructors respond to texts because student papers are often regarded as finished products to be analyzed. College teachers first consider content, then organization, and last mechanics of papers, while he says secondary teachers focus on form rather than content. Griffin points out that “we would not perceive many of the errors we do if we were not consciously looking for them” (298). If student papers were read in the same way we read newspapers and books, we would find fewer errors. Instead of viewing errors as illnesses to be eradicated, instructors should see them as necessary stages in the learning process. In any endeavor, such as playing baseball or the violin, errors are numerous early on, but diminish with practice and continued exposure to environments conducive to improvement. A baseball player usually knows what he or she did ‘wrong’ when striking out, but the techniques to avoid repeating similar circumstances can be refined, often through guidance from a coach. Likewise, when playing an instrument, even a novice knows when notes do not ‘sound’ right, but with guidance and practice improvement can be accomplished. Both the baseball and violin players need to be aware of how to improve, and being able to articulate steps is necessary to realize the desired goals. One technique to determine why students make certain errors is to have students explain the errors. Another is to have the students read the papers out loud and use their spoken language skills to communicate the information. It is also useful to ask students to comment on the teachers’ comments. Both

NNW and NW I teach want to know *why* something is considered ‘bad’ or ‘wrong’ and prefer a positive to a sarcastic tone. Students report that marks on grammar and spelling errors are not useful. John C. Bean in *Engaging Ideas* also discusses how reading theories influence how instructors respond to papers and encourages revision-oriented to editing-oriented comments. However, instructors must be careful when responding to student writing not to gauge the student papers against an abstract idealized, perfect paper, which does not exist. Otherwise, all fall short and comments tend to be punitive, highlighting what is ‘wrong’ rather than informative and motivating for the students. In my opinion, when responding to student writing, instructors should stimulate thought rather than simply point out errors.

In *An Unquiet Pedagogy*, Eleanor Kutz and Hephzibah Roskelly discuss that focusing on ‘error’ when responding to student writing is popular because it is supposedly objective (279), but they offer other alternatives. Teachers should focus more on determining whether or not the student has made progress (280) and if the student is ready for the demands of writing in more advanced English composition courses as well as other disciplines (282), rather than pointing out what’s wrong with a paper. Along the same vein, Mina P. Shaughnessy provides a foundational work concerning how to interact with Basic Writers entitled *Errors and Expectations*. Shaughnessy points out that Basic Writers who do not control the code of writing are facing tremendous obstacles as they are immersed in a culture that generates more writing than any in history (13). Instead of focusing on prescriptive grammar and mechanics with an ideal paper in mind, Shaughnessy argues that instructors should respond to each student’s individual needs, or errors, in order to determine appropriate expectations. Errors shift the readers’ attention

from where they are going to how they are getting there (12) and any confusion on the part of the readers will be deemed the authors' fault and considered 'bad' writing. As Mina Shaughnessy points out, in a 300 word essay, an average academic reader tolerates between five to six errors before saying the writer needs to study BW for a semester. A beginning BW averages between ten and thirty errors in this length of essay. A large number of errors not only causes extra effort on the part of readers, but also causes them to doubt writers' competencies (122). Errors in grammar and punctuation are important when they interfere with meaning, and should not be taught in isolation, but always within a rhetorical context. Shaughnessy further elaborates the idea that errors should not be the focus during early drafts and revision stages, but only during the final editing and proofreading: "One of the main purposes of punctuation is to help readers see in advance how the part they are about to read relates to what has just been read" (26). Shaughnessy describes the writer's relationship with the audience as the "economics of energy in a writing situation" (11). The audience and author are in conflict about how much effort each will expend on the other because both want to expend as little energy as possible in order to communicate. She describes the reader as the buyer in a buyer's market and argues that the key problem with errors is they cause effort without giving any return in meaning (12).

Andrea Lunsford in "Politics and Practices in Basic Writing" carries Shaughnessy's notion further and notes that BW classes still have the stigma of being 'remedial', suggesting something is 'wrong' with students who are in BW classes. She reminds us that the composition class was first established in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century at Harvard to try and help weak students get their writing levels 'up to speed' and to college

level quality so they could ‘really’ learn something (247). Lunsford desires a new definition of literacy which suggests more than simply knowledge of a particular canon (252). She states that:

the kind of knowledge and skill that will enable students to make sense of their worlds, to determine their own interests, both individual and collective, to see through the manipulations of all sorts of texts in all sorts of media, and to express their own views in some appropriate manner. That they need both knowledge and skill is perhaps a matter worth pausing to consider. (257)

Mike Rose points out in *Lives on the Boundary* that medical terms prevail to describe BW as if they are sick and need to be cured. The students are *diagnosed* with *deficiencies, disabilities, handicaps, defects, and deficits*, but the education system tries to *remedy* their conditions, usually through *remedial* classes (209). The social and cultural isolation of BW students is significant and Rose indicates that remedial classes, such as BW, teach students that they are incapable when it comes to writing and the only hope to cure these students is to teach them grammatical correctness.

Language is not comprised of distinct units that can easily be scrutinized for correctness, but consists of listening, speaking, reading and writing, which are interrelated and build upon one another. Lunsford indicates there is a lack of integration of the four modes of communication in BW classes, and Constance Weaver in *Teaching Grammar in Context* explains that even NW children’s written grammatical constructions in writing do not catch up to their spoken until the seventh grade (123). The gap between spoken and written language remains as students pass through high school and enter post-

secondary education. Although writing becomes more sophisticated as students age and continue to study, their abilities to verbally articulate themselves also increases. Thus the tremendous gap remains, so a key benefit of group and peer interaction is that students can draw on their verbal semantic and syntactic constructs, which are far more advanced than their written, as they discuss each others' writings. This also solidifies the social aspect of language as students negotiate meanings and learn there is no 'one' correct way to write. Lunsford stresses the cultural implications of writing in Standard American English and states, "the power to write, to express clearly and truly, translates into political, economic and social power" (253). She explains that too often BW courses are just watered down and over-simplified versions of 'regular' composition classes and agrees with Shaughnessy that workbook type grammar exercises have little to no value. Lunsford and Shaughnessy argue that errors should be addressed within the context of the students' own writing, rather than as an abstract 'correct' ideal to be attained. In other words, instructors should respond to and work with grammar issues particular to the individual student and his or her purpose in writing instead of objectively marking errors based on a distanced textbook.

David Bartholomae's article "Writing on the Margins: The Concept of Literacy in Higher Education" discusses the issue of how the concept of a BW works outside the dominant discourse and is considered 'less literate', much like an uncultured aboriginal may appear to an English person speaking London dialect:

they work with a style that is preacademic. They are caught in some earlier step in cognitive development (at the level of concrete rather than form operations, for example), or they belong to a culture that is pretextual (an

oral culture, like those that preceded the development of alphabetic writing) and that hinders the cognitive development required for literate participation in a textual culture. (69)

With this attitude prevalent in universities, it is difficult for BW to navigate within the privileged community, and Bartholomae considers language to be politically charged and argues that the problem of writing is one of how power and authority are dispersed (70). Bartholomae seeks to make the relationship between the student and institution central, which echoes the Bakhtinian tension between centripetal and centrifugal forces.

According to Bartholomae, the key to what is considered effective or ‘good’ writing is discourse that reveals the writer is connected to the social and historical world (76).

Robert Pattison in *On Literacy: The Politics of the Word from Homer to the Age of Rock* observes, “the literate person must be conscious of the questions posed by language....and be able to express this consciousness in ways sanctioned by the culture in which he lives” (9). Bartholomae warns against error analysis, which views nonstandard sentences in the context of what professors consider its intended structure. He emphasizes that this ‘shadow sentence’ is not from the student, but from the instructor (“Writing on the Margins” 80). A positive aspect of error analysis for Bartholomae is that it teaches instructors to do close readings of student papers, but there are too many cultural influences at work within writing to be able to use error analysis as an effective corrective tool. He proposes extending the method used in error analysis to broader contextual issues, such as weak arguments, conclusions, or appropriate examples, all of which reflect students’ relationships to the dominant discourse. Error analysis in itself is insufficient, according to Bartholomae, because it is only surface level instruction (81).

Increased interaction between instructor and student is necessary in order to move beyond direct grammar instruction to address deeper underlying issues that BW need to engage.

Janice Neuleib and Irene Brosnahan in “Approaches to Grammar Instruction” point to studies that demonstrate college students made significant improvement in writing without any direct grammar instruction. Sentence combining and essay writing are effective methods to learn grammar indirectly (147). In line with Shaughnessy, Neuleib and Brosnahan argue that students should work only with errors in their own writing and not spend time and effort retaining external rules. The authors believe many teachers are not familiar enough with grammar themselves to effectively implement an indirect approach, hence the heavy reliance upon grammar textbooks written by grammarians for grammarians. Most current grammatical forms arose in the Eighteenth Century and the printing press made language less fluid. At that time, scholars considered Latin to be the most logical and precise of all languages and thus superior. Bishop Lowth, in his book *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*, published in 1762, has had a tremendous effect on the English language and he took Latin as the standard to prescribe rules for English grammar. Grammar structures, such as the eight parts of speech, are quite logical and consistent to inflectional forms of Latin, but are inconsistent and illogical when the Latin form is applied to functions in English. Neuleib and Brosnahan stress the importance of educating teachers on how to engage grammar indirectly instead of through traditional techniques, which can be effective for NNW. As Weaver points out in *Teaching Grammar in Context*, unstructured sentence combining is an effective exercise to learn grammar indirectly (13). Structured sentence combining is quite popular in grammar workbooks and involves having the students combine two or three sentences,

which may help with simple conjunctions and transitions, but has limited value.

Unstructured sentence combining involves listing ten different sentences, or only ten different ideas, and having the students combine these ideas into a coherent paragraph. In a classroom situation, students can then discuss which paragraphs are most effective and why, realizing an effective way to increase rhetorical skills, and the students learn grammar indirectly. Instructors can then respond to the students' paragraphs, but be careful not to take ownership away from the original authors.

In 1982 Nancy Sommers published "Responding to Student Writing" and used the word 'appropriating' to indicate the dangers of teacher comments taking over the purposes of the texts, especially as students tend to "slavishly respond to teacher comments" (150). She warns that teachers' comments can easily take over and assume authority of a text, leaving the students searching for what the teacher wants instead of actually thinking and composing. Sommers states that rubber stamp comments, which can be applied to virtually any paper, have little value and instructors often confuse students by sending conflicting messages. In her article, she includes a sample paper in which the instructor has told the student to edit and expand the same paragraph (151). Which draft the instructor is responding to is quite important. An early draft should not involve editing or mechanical comments because these should be saved until the final draft as these comments respond to a finished product. As Peter Elbow indicates in *Writing Without Teachers*, there is no reason to edit a sentence if the entire paragraph or section of the paper is going to be revised, so early comments should be process-oriented and only final draft responses geared toward the product (15). In my opinion, a lack of



editing in early stages helps protect against Sommer's warning that teachers should not take too much authority from the students' writing.

### Responding to Non-Native Writers

Joy Reid's article "ESL Student Texts: The Myth of Appropriation" offers solutions to the dilemma raised by Nancy Sommers. She argues that it is possible for instructors to provide effective comments while allowing students to maintain ownership of their papers. A key ingredient in Reid's recipe is communicating with students based on contexts. For example, early in the semester when the students are strangers, Reid's comments tend to be more generic and directive, then, based on how the students respond and revise, she begins to tailor comments more individually ("Myth of Appropriation" 214). She believes comments should engage at the intersection where the rhetorical situation, process pedagogy and issues of authority meet. Instructors should design comments to help students understand that meaning-making is shared by both author and reader. Through such interaction, students should learn how to view their own writing as readers and not simply as authors, which enables them to incorporate more effective revisions. Teachers, through their feedback, model for students how to read and examine their own papers for revision. Pavel Zemliansky in *Error as Process: Applying ESL Pedagogy in First Language Composition* supports independent student thought, even though he is coming from a different angle, examining how to use ESL strategies in composition instruction for native English speakers. He discusses the benefits for process-over product-oriented assignments, but points out that there is still too much emphasis on error and what the teacher wants (10). A key point of his argument is that

students should be trained to critically evaluate their own writing and learn how to correct their own errors in order to become truly mature, empowered writers (54).

Some do not agree that peer-review process pedagogy is appropriate for NNW. Vai Ramanathan and Dwight Atkinson in *Individualism, Academic Writing, and ESL Writers* argue against the process pedagogy in composition and state that it is the result of individualized, western society, which is often not conducive to students of other cultures. Ramanathan and Atkinson criticize western pedagogy arguing that “the core notion seems to be that, as individuals, we all have essentially private and isolated inner selves, which we give outward expression to through the use of a metaphorical ‘voice’” (161). This approach requires language which is clear, overt, expressive, assertive and demonstrative, or American. Ramanathan questions this type of hegemony in the composition class room. For example, in Japan, language is more highly valued because of what it does not express rather than what it tries to make clear or overt (162). Ramanathan and Atkinson write, “Elbow is so productive in North America because self expression is based solely on the western individualistic sense of self. This stance is all but unintelligible to Chinese writers” (166), making it almost impossible for some students to succeed in a process-based pedagogy because the writing process asks the writer that he or she take the rhetorical position:

of an autonomous, rational mind, untroubled by the inconsistencies of the phenomenal world and equally untroubled by the push and pull of human arrangements. This is a persona which western students readily accept.... but the purpose of student writing [in Taiwanese Chinese culture] is to learn to take on a scholarly voice in the role of commentator on the

classics and on the scholarship of others. One is writing to pass on what one has received. (166)

American teachers insist that good writing demonstrate the student's unique perspectives or the student will be derided as moving away from natural 'voice' and sounding artificial. Shen, a Chinese student, indicates that he was told by an American teacher to "be yourself" when he writes, yet, "himself" is Chinese and diametrically opposed to western, process composition pedagogy, so he had to create a 'western self' in order to write in English (169). Ramanathan suggests that it is unfair to expect ESL students to change their identities when they compose. However, I argue that Bakhtin's notion of ideological becoming and Goncalves' intersectionality answer this concern.

NNW do not 'change' their identities as they acquire increased sophistication and understanding concerning the English language; rather, they enhance and add to their existing identities. As I surmise, the misunderstanding arises primarily through the concept that identities are essential, or 'fixed', rather than constructed, or 'changing'. As Goncalves asserts, "identity is multiple, fluid, constructed, and finally performed" (24) and I maintain that NNW "can never be entirely free of or outside the discourse and its determining power, nor are they wholly determined by it" (18). As ideological becoming, or conscious identity, interacts with the world and texts, the centripetal and centrifugal forces come into play which do not negate ESL students' identities, but offer venues for expressing themselves in novel and potentially unprecedented ways. Emphasis on 'voice' is no threat to NNW identities as it provides the opportunity for increased growth.

The peer review process is also challenged by Ramanathan as it assumes a strong individualistic nature as well. Ramanathan questions the validity of peer review and

perceives it as sessions where the individual is confronted and is expected to express his or her unique perspective for the purpose of individual improvement (170). Ramanathan argues that this is extremely difficult and counter-productive for students who come from cultures with more interdependent views of social relations and in Asia, the concept of 'face' is the most important aspect of the 'self'. According to Ramanathan, peer review often makes one 'lose face' or causes participants not to provide honest feedback in order to save the face of another (173). However, I maintain that group work and peer review encourage a diminishing of self as the individual becomes involved in negotiating meanings and discussing various perspectives with others. Actually, peer review is quite conducive to collectivist societies, such as China, where group consensus is valued above individualistic tendencies. In my experience, Chinese students have worked as well as American students in groups.

The concern for students 'losing face' that Ramanathan expresses is no different than western students who first are apprehensive about giving honest, critical feedback to friends and acquaintances for fear of hurting feelings or damaging relationships. In my experience, western students, like Chinese, do not feel 'qualified' to give critical feedback or tell their peers how to improve their writing. Ramanathan exaggerates and possibly misunderstands the concept of Asian 'face' in this instance. Given the same guidance, such as the Reader Response handout in Appendix A, Chinese students provide just as meaningful feedback as western students and Ramanathan's argument has the opposite of her expressed desired effect in that she discourages interaction with and the development of the social aspect of language by suggesting the negation of peer review for NNW. By arguing that peer review is ineffective for NNW, Ramanathan is blocking

the potential for NNW to experience meaningful interaction, relationship and ultimately grow into more mature writers.

Ramanathan refers to American ‘progressive’ pedagogy as a ‘hidden pedagogy’ which is really based on mainstream social practices and is in reality authoritarian (177). Non-directive teacher behavior that facilitates discovery and assertion of the self common to expressivist process-writing, she asserts, advantages those who have been practiced in this type of structure through “a highly child-centered, middle class form of socialization” (177). Voice, peer review, critical thinking and textual ownership all are part of the hidden pedagogy of a supposedly progressive education which is in fact based on the self-actualization of the individual. Ramanathan connects this primacy of the individual in education, largely to the influence of Dewey. Berlin points out the assumptions behind expressivist writing:

In *Writing Without Teachers*, Elbow admits that his knowledge about writing was gained from personal experience and that he has no reservations about making universal generalization upon a sample of one. Murray is even more explicit: the writer is on a search for himself. If the writer finds himself he will find audience, because all of us have the same common core. And when he digs deeply into himself and is able to define himself, he will find others who will read with a shock of recognition what he has written. (178)

The common core of individual inspiration finding universal connections is what Ramanathan takes issue with when dealing with ESL students. Instead of the current progressive, expressivist, process theories dominating many composition classrooms,

more studies of individuals in contexts should be examined rather than expecting students to submit to western anglophile pedagogies (179). I disagree with Ramanathan's accusation that individual voice connecting to common experience is purely a western mentality and I ascertain she implies that teaching 'voice' is an aspect of western colonization. Unless she considers Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism as having western roots, all three of these strongly influential belief systems indicate how the self is connected to the whole, echoing what Berlin states in the quotation above concerning how, when one's voice is communicated, others read with a shock of recognition. In India, I learned that a dominant form of Hinduism states the goal of life should be to find one's *ātman*, or identical self with the supreme soul of Brahman. When one becomes aware of his or her innermost self, then *moksha*, or freedom, is reached and is total identification with *the* soul of Brahman and all life, which includes all other individuals. I argue that the meaningful communication of the connection with one's self with others is synonymous with the western notion of 'voice'. Likewise, Mahayana Buddhism, which has replaced Theravada Buddhism as the more dominant strand worldwide, teaches that ultimate reality involves the fact that all are one, but one can only fully embrace existence through nothingness. The path to nothingness involves experiencing shared compassion, or common positive, internal intentions, among individuals. In fact, most Buddhists argue that the individual 'self' is an illusion and all individual souls are connected as One. Likewise, Confucianism teaches cultivation of the self and its relationship with others. The western 'voice' Elbow, Murray and other expressivists promote actually touches the 'connectedness' that guides much eastern thought. Therefore, Ramanathan is mistaken to

accuse ‘voice’ or process pedagogy of being a western anglophile force and western progressive pedagogy is not a ‘hidden pedagogy’ seeking to colonize the Other.

Ramanathan raises legitimate issues, but none of which cannot be overcome through sensitive instructional techniques. For example, Jacques Derrida in *Writing and Difference* discusses *bricoleur*, which involves “someone who uses the means at hand....one does not hesitate to change the means whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous” (288). Dené Scoggins, in “Contrastive Rhetoric Theory in an Electronic Medium: Teaching ESL Writers to Computer-Assisted Classroom”, further elaborates on Derrida’s notion of *bricoleur* by indicating that NNW can suspend, rather than discard, their native rhetorical styles, applying L1 and L2 strategies when necessary. Scoggins goes on to maintain that printed Western material inhibits dialogue and potential for expansive interactions between L1 and L2. Although a new discourse never escapes the older forms, online discussions, or internet hypertexts, are much more open than traditional printed material and allow for free play between native and non-native rhetorics because electronic material can be manipulated and changed easily and often spontaneously, allowing for more immediate interaction and communication, such as through instant messenger. This creates the ability for students to juxtapose contradictory rhetorical elements in a form of *bricolage*. Hypertexting better allows NNW to use whichever rhetorical strategies are more appropriate for the situation. Based on the ideas communicated by Derrida, Scoggins and Kaplan, I suggest that *bricolage* allows room for L1 and L2 rhetorics to interact, rather than clash, but it is the responsibility of the instructor to genuinely guide and facilitate the learning environments, especially in group settings, in order to achieve

maximum effect. In my opinion, rather than having a negative attitude towards cultural differences, as do Ramanathan and Atkins, instructors can use the various cultural backgrounds in a positive manner to enrich the entire class. For example, NW could re-write essays using Japanese style rhetoric, which stresses reader responsibility over author responsibility to communicate meaning. Viewing from a different perspective is much like ideas Toby Fulwiler expresses in “Provocative Revision”, appearing as Radical Revision in Appendix B, but is even more provocative in that I suggest not only switching genre or perspective, but rhetorical stance as well.

Guangwei Hu in “Using Peer Review with Chinese ESL Writers” likewise addresses many of the issues Ramanathan and Atkins raise. Common concerns are that NNW are not competent enough in English to provide meaningful feedback in peer review and tend to focus only on surface level LOC and, when they do address HOC, they are usually rubber stamp comments. Also, students from hierarchical cultures do not believe peers are qualified to provide feedback and those from collectivist cultures seek harmony in the peer group rather than honest critique. As Guangwei asserts and my personal experience confirms, the key is for the instructor to provide adequate guidance in peer review before, during and after the process (330). Guangwei realizes that inadequate teacher follow up is the primary reason for failed peer review.

Although not easy or always organized, peer review encourages writers to take risks and create meanings (322). The benefits of peer review not only involve collaboration, but also encourage students to negotiate meanings independent from teachers, resulting in more mature writers. Peer review is more like real-world writing than are traditional assignments, which are simply geared to please the established



classroom authority (324). Peer review, like real world writing, is read by different people, and awareness of any break between the intended and understood meanings is important. Guangwei states, “students learn to respond to and evaluate their peers’ writing by reading teacher comments on their own writing,” (336) and he indicates that students need to have opportunities to interact with peers who are at different levels of language ability (339). It is important to provide adequate training and guidance concerning how to conduct peer review for NNW and instructors should not limit peer review to simply pair work, but also incorporate group peer review into the classroom and allow students to receive feedback from as many different individuals as possible. de Guerrero in “Social-cognitive Dimensions of Interaction in L2 Peer Revision” covers the importance of peer review in responding to NNW and uses Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for support. The ZPD simply refers to the skills or knowledge that individuals can acquire with the assistance of a mentor or guide. The social interaction between peers is a type of ZPD and is crucial to the internalization of acquiring the target language. de Guerrero recommends having peer groups and partners of different language levels interact with each other. Peer review is extremely valuable as it provides non-evaluative feedback, which is necessary in order for writers to improve.

Vicki L. Holmes and Margaret R. Moulton in “Dialogue Journals as an ESL Learning Strategy” point out key benefits of non-evaluative assignments, which includes “learning through interaction...providing enhancement of reading skills, modeling of correct grammatical forms, natural evolution of grammatical structures, and interaction in a private, nonthreatening way” (616). This approach further advances the argument that language is socially constructed, so it is counter-productive for instructors to function as

authorities strictly teaching the ‘correct’ way to write. Holmes and Moulton refer to Vygotsky’s theory of modeling and learning, indicating that dialogue journals provide a healthy means of social interaction, as the students can mimic the teacher’s style as they develop their own. According to Holmes and Moulton, students have reported improvement not only in writing, but in thinking in English through dialogue journals.

Ilona Leki in “Reciprocal Themes in ESL Reading and Writing” discusses how weaker NNW focus on word and sentence level concerns rather than broader issues. She calls for more interaction between the teaching of reading and writing as these two activities are reciprocal and no one can be a good writer unless he or she is also a good reader. Currently, many programs separate teaching L2 reading and writing, but Leki argues they should be integrated. She warns against appropriating meaning in the reading. For example, instead of asking, “what does the author mean here?”, a better question would be, “what did you get out of this?” Instead of probing L2 students to seek a pre-determined main idea, it is more effective to allow students to negotiate their own meanings from texts, based on their unique perspectives. This strategy will inevitably improve the students’ writing as well, because as they become more adept at constructing meanings from reading, they will become more effective at developing meanings in their own writing. Guadalupe Valdés in “Bilingual Minorities and Language Issues in Writing: Toward Professionwide Responses to a New Challenge” indicates that teaching NNW involves more than celebrating differences. NNW instruction requires pedagogical adjustments based on the students’ unique characteristics and backgrounds. Valdés investigates how to accommodate NNW in mainstream composition classrooms designed

for NW. She indicates how compartmentalized the English department is as indicated by the Venn diagram in Figure 1.

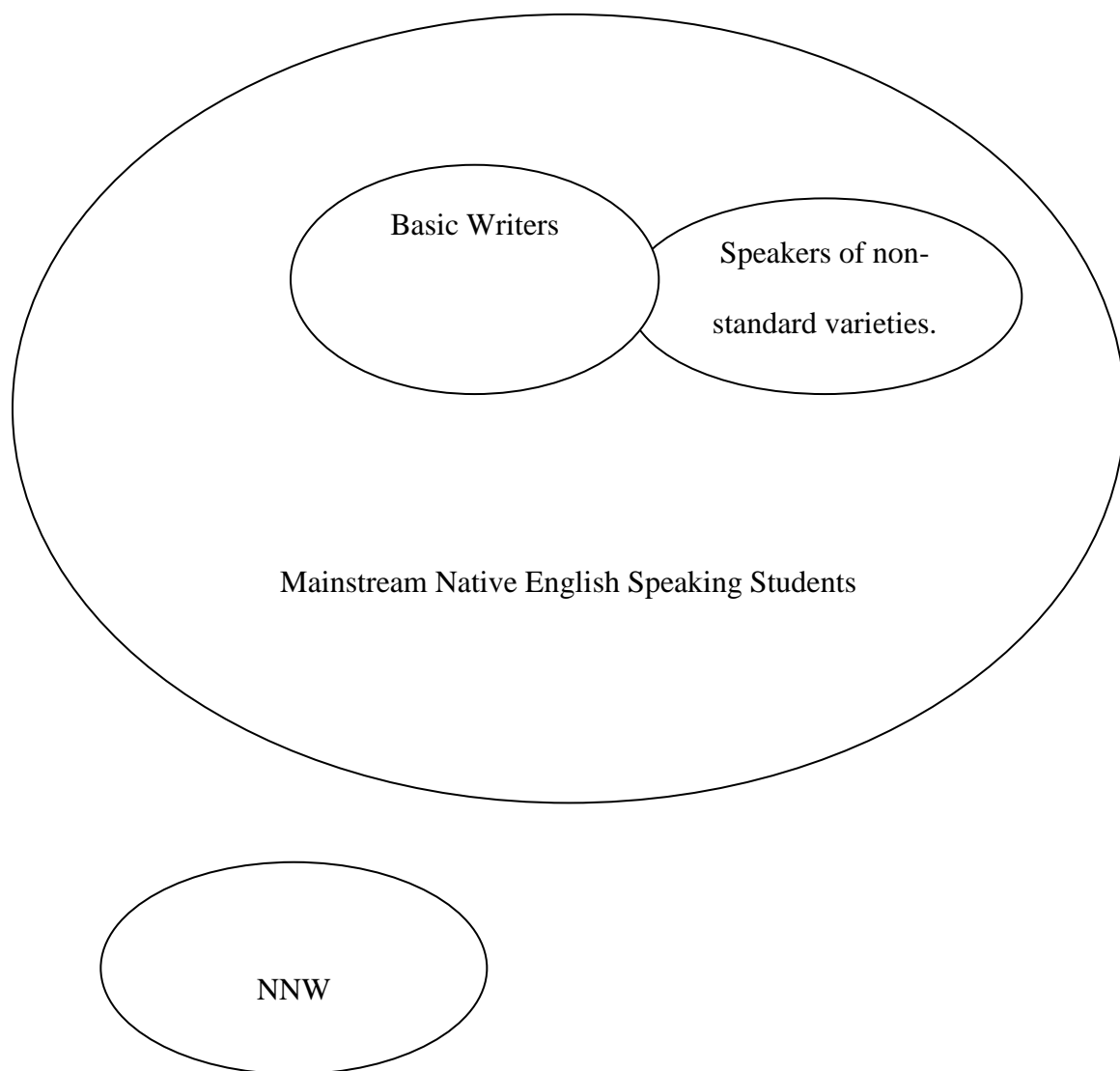


Fig. 1

The diagram is illustrative only as the exact size of the populations is not established.

As illustrated, most of the instruction is geared towards the majority mainstream SAE speakers and writers. A significant amount also pertains to BW and to speakers of non-

standard varieties of English, such as individuals who are monodialectal speakers of African American or Appalachian dialects. Students who can both speak in dialect and SAE are placed either within the BW or mainstream category. Valdés points out that the compartmentalization is further amplified as instructors who teach to NW generally belong to the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) while L2 instructors typically belong to Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE). She indicates there is a need for increased communication between mainstream English and L2 instructors in order to better address how to respond effectively to NNW in BW classes, especially as NNW are far from a homogenous group that just happens to be separate from the NW population.

Valdés also distinguishes between Elective and Circumstantial bilinguals (Appendix C), as each requires a different approach concerning how to respond to their writing. Elective bilinguals are individuals who choose to come to America to study. They are usually middle class and often enroll in language classes for preparation, so communication is often artificially created in classrooms and Elective bilinguals typically retain L1 as their primary tongue as the vast majority of the time their study and use of English is temporary, (such as the length of time necessary to acquire a degree). Circumstantial bilinguals are typically working class immigrants and English is learned for necessity and survival. Over time, circumstantial bilinguals become stable in their L2 communication skills and the two languages complement and enhance each other. However, for the vast majority of adult first generation bilinguals, L1 remains dominant. Usually, the second generation bilinguals, often termed 1.5 generation, become

proficient, if not fluent, in English by the time they complete secondary school. However, they do not acquire the rich varieties of rapport common to L1 users because the informal and intimate language used by L1 individuals at home is still in their native tongues.

Valdés further distinguishes circumstantial bilinguals into incipient and functional bilinguals. The incipient circumstantial bilingual is an individual who is in the process of acquiring English and becomes a functional circumstantial bilingual when he or she can communicate well enough to navigate reasonably well in society and (if in academia) is ready to be placed in mainstream classes. The chart in Appendix C summarizes the stages of incipient and functional bilingualism as outlined by Valdés. Currently, the profession is not designed to accommodate diverse learners that exist outside the categories and the place of incipient and how functional bilinguals fall within the categories stipulated in Figure 2 is displayed below:

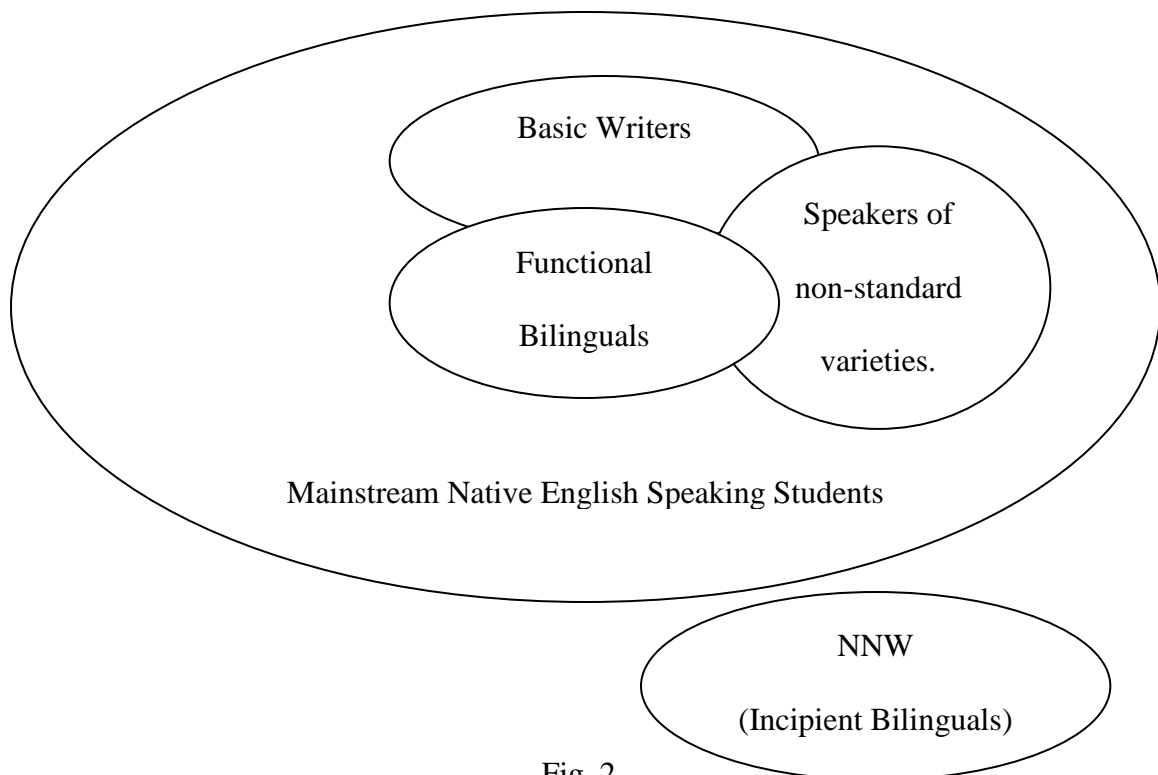


Fig. 2

According to Valdés, “scholars have not yet developed criteria for evaluating when a given individual can be considered to have passed from the incipient bilingualism to the fully developed stage” (44). She argues that even after bilinguals acquire fully functional abilities in L2, that learner-like features still remain, which she calls ‘fossilization’. She states that fossilization occurs at the phonological, morphological and syntactical levels, which present problems for composition instructors because they do not know whether the non-native features in a paper are due to the student still being in the incipient stage or if it is a manifestation of fossilization. According to Allegra B. Elson, “Fossilization in language can be defined as follows: Interlanguage patterns which seem not to change, even after extended exposure to or instruction in the target language” (*Fossilized Language Forms* 2). Fossilization involves when an error in speech or written discourse becomes a habit for a non-native language user, but does not interfere with communication. For example, because the vast majority of words in Mandarin end with a vowel sound rather than a consonant, so many Chinese students pronounce the /e/ in words such as ‘like’, or ‘likey’ to a native English speaking ear. A deeper, more difficult example to address is how Chinese respond to tag questions. For example, if an American asks, “you didn’t go to the park today?”, another American would answer “no, I didn’t”, or “yes, I did.” Except a few advanced learners bordering on fluency in English, Chinese will answer “yes, I didn’t go to the park today.” The confusing part is they usually just answer “yes”, without the “I didn’t go” added. Chinese language responds to the person, not the question as does English, making this fossilization a rhetorical issue. Another difficult fossilization for Chinese to overcome is confusing ‘he’ and ‘she’ pronouns because they are pronounced identically as *tā* in Chinese, leaving the context to determine whether it is a masculine or feminine reference. In writing, similar fossilization occurs, and one of the

more frequent occurrences of fossilization for NNW is skipping around the past-perfect in English and expressing this tense in an easier way (Rafalovitch). For example, instead of writing “Richard *had lived* in China, so Kim called him to find out more about the Asian culture”, a typical fossilized rendition often uses the simple past, such as “Richard *lived* in China, so Kim called him to find out more about the Asian culture.” The more advanced learners may insert *before* after *lived* to clarify, but still tend to avoid the past-perfect (Wang). Likewise, many NNW in the fossilization stage still struggle with correct preposition usage as connections are formed differently in many languages. If learner-like, or Interlanguage, features are due to the incipient stage, the student would benefit from an L2 specialist, but if due to fossilization, then further instruction in morphology or syntax will be of little to no use.

I believe that integrating CR, or valuing the diverse rhetorics present in the classroom, would benefit both incipient and functional bilinguals who are in the fossilization stage. Incipient bilinguals would be able to connect the new information to something they already know and as a result better acquire English because they can utilize rhetorical strategies prevalent in their own languages with which they are already familiar. I also believe that functional bilinguals who have fossilized aspects of their native languages are more likely to break loose from the awkward structures they produce in English if allowed to communicate in the target language through their native rhetorics. Valdés summarizes by stating that most instruction for NNW is geared towards elective bilinguals who received instruction in English in their home countries and more mainstream scholarship needs to be devoted to functional bilinguals.

In “Eye Learners and Ear Learners: Identifying the Language Needs of International Student and U.S. Resident Writers”, Joy Reid addresses NNW whose verbal abilities in English far exceed their written, as well as immigrants who have had little to no schooling in their native countries. These students’ writing is very conversational and mimics the phonetic aspects of the language. On the other end of the spectra are the elective bilingual students who have chosen to study in the U.S. and come from relatively privileged and well educated backgrounds. Instead of learning English primarily by listening, or through their ears, these students learn English primarily through their eyes by studying vocabulary and grammar rules. Usually, the elective bilinguals have comparatively adequate reading skills, but their listening and speaking are weak due to lack of direct contact with native speakers and being suddenly immersed in a foreign culture. Likewise, elective bilinguals’ writing skills are weak because they have had little opportunity to compose genuine or meaningful writing, but instead have been subjected to grammar drills or single sentence answers. The majority of students fall between these two extremes with substantial education in their native language and come to America with their families after experiencing limited instruction in English in their home countries (80). It is important for teachers to determine as soon as possible if the student is a U.S. resident or an international student as the circumstances significantly influence how to approach instruction. A sample appears in the Appendix D, which is the questionnaire Reid suggests instructors use to determine the NNW language background. With this basic information, instructors can better tailor assignments and feedback to meet individual needs of NNW. For example, if students are circumstantial bilinguals with little to no formal schooling, initially a more directive approach focusing



proportionately more on grammar would be appropriate feedback. In my opinion, grammar should be a focus in early drafts if LOC interfere with meaning, which they are more likely to do with circumstantial than with elective bilinguals. After students revise and can communicate in basically clear English, then I suggest instructors move on to addressing HOC when responding to student writing. The key difference is that with elective bilinguals who have had a comparatively significant amount of education in their home countries, instructors should wait until final drafts to address grammar, while for circumstantial bilinguals who have had relatively little exposure to education in their home countries, there is a stronger need to address grammatical concerns early.

Paul Kei Matsuda's article "Second Language Writing in the Twentieth Century: A Situated Historical Perspective" is valuable because it provides an overview of how L2 instruction has changed throughout the last one hundred years. L2 instruction did not receive much attention until the 1940s, when the totalitarianism rising in Latin American countries made teaching English to people of those countries a matter of national security (15). L2 instruction largely neglected writing and the audiolingual approach dominated because spoken language was considered to take precedence over written. Under this theory, instructors believed students could write once they mastered the sounds and structures of English.

Between the 1950s and 1960s, the number of international students in America increased significantly, rising from 6,570 to 29,813 within the decade (16). By the late 1950s, English as a Second Language (ESL) specialists were thought the only ones capable of teaching L2 students and by the mid-1960s, NNW instruction had moved entirely out of English department and into second language studies. However, L2

instructor's training consisted almost entirely with spoken language, so NNW under L2 studies was relegated to a remedial class status and the focus was on teaching students to write grammatically correct sentences, known as controlled composition. Controlled composition was unable to teach students how to write original sentences, so the next step was guided composition which involves "any writing for which students are given assistance such as a model to follow, a plan or outline to expand from, a partly-written version with indications of how to complete it" (18). However, neither controlled nor guided writing proved successful as both focused on sentence level concerns.

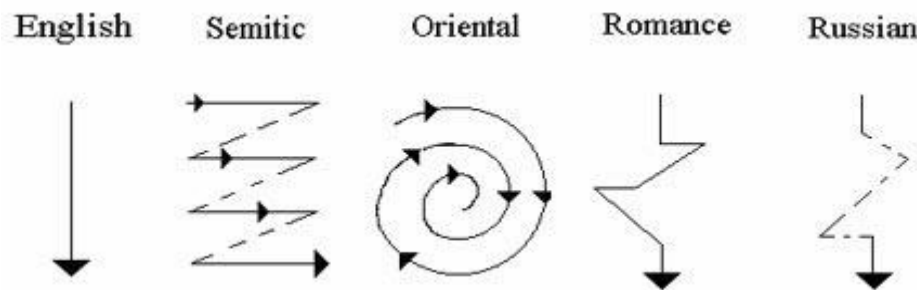
Responding to BW offers particular challenges, such as resisting the temptation to compare the students' papers to what the instructors consider an abstract, ideal form of written discourse on the topic. Also, instructors need to meet the students where they are and begin instruction at the appropriate level and place, rather than allowing the lockstep method propagated by 'no child left behind' to dominate. The lockstep method of moving every unique individual in systematic synchronicity, expecting diverse individuals from disparate background to all learn the same information simultaneously and at the same rate, is largely responsible for producing BW in the first place. Continuing the lockstep strategy ensures the BW will remain labeled as insufficient writers and severely limit their potentials, and by extension their freedoms, after graduation.

Negative effects the lockstep method produces are exacerbated when NNW enter the BW classroom. Derrida's notion of *bricoleur*, Sommer's emphasis on responding based on individual context as well as combining attributes of Social Epistemic and Expressivist pedagogies improve the effectiveness of instruction in the BW classroom for NNW. Of key importance to me, when responding to NNW in BW classrooms, is

simultaneously valuing the individual voice and social aspects of language. Bakhtin and Vygotsky are correct in their assertion that language and knowledge are socially constructed and words are not truly ‘our own’, except in that individual accents are added based on unique experiences, but the relatedness to others and necessity of *dialogue* to exist in order for language to even exist, removes total reliance upon the individual voice to communicate. I perceive heteroglossia to be a link between the expressivist and social epistemic camps, as it values unique communication among diverse and even conflicting ideologies. If instructors use the heteroglossic nature of language as a guide when critically responding to NNW in BW classes, I am convinced they will produce more understanding, effective feedback than if they only rely on hard and fast rules stipulated in textbooks. Robert Kaplan suggested instruction for NNW should go beyond the sentence level and that variances in paragraph and document structures were cultural. He proposed that “writing is much more than an orthographic symbolization of speech; it is, most importantly, a purposeful selection and organization of experience” (19) and founded the field of Contrastive Rhetoric (CR). CR offers a novel approach, if integrated into the BW classroom, which will result in more effective responses to NNW.

### CHAPTER 3: CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC

Robert B. Kaplan's Doodles, first published in 1966, began the study of CR. His main contribution to the field involves his acute understanding and communication that "rhetoric is not universal, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a culture" ("Cultural Thought Patterns" 12). Ulla Conner in "Contrastive Rhetoric: Old and New Directions" explains Kaplan's Doodles by indicating that Anglo writing tends to be linear, Semitic parallel and Oriental, or Asian, is indirect while the Romance Languages and Russian are typically digressive, or contain what English speakers consider unnecessary information (5).



Much has been done in CR since Kaplan's Doodles in efforts to improve and build upon the original work, which did not take into account differences in genre, socio-economic backgrounds or previous writing instruction. Carol Severino, among others, accuse Kaplan of being ethnocentric and promoting the superiority of English and western thought processes ("Doodles in Context" 47). Evidently, Severino and other critics who support this assertion did not actually read Kaplan, or did not do so with comprehension, because in his landmark essay, "Cultural Thought Patterns", he states: "English is not a better nor a worse system than any other, but it is different" (12). This statement is the opposite of claiming superiority of one linguistic or thought system over another. The

only support Severino gives for her claim, which I consider to be a false accusation, is when she cites Kaplan as stating, “the foreign student who has mastered the syntax of English may still write a bad paragraph or a bad paper unless he also masters the logic of English” (21). Perhaps Severino only read this sentence in isolation without reading, or perhaps she read and did not understand, the context of the article, because Kaplan makes it obvious that likewise, a westerner can (and often does) master the syntax of Japanese, Chinese, Russian, or any language, yet still writes bad paragraphs and papers in the second language until he or she understands the underlying thought and cultural processes that drive the language. Languages live in history and English happens to derive from Platonic-Aristotelian ordered sequencing, later influenced by Germanic and Roman Medieval Europe and modern western thinkers (12). According to Hans-Georg Moeller, what is considered effective, meaningful expression in Mandarin arose from strong influences by the *Daodejing*, attributed to Laozi, whom many scholars regard as Asia’s counterpart to Plato (*The Philosophy of the Daodejing* 2). My point is that Kaplan does not indicate the west or English is superior, but simply states the reality of differing thought patterns and rhetorical devices and points out that a key problem is that NNW “employ a rhetoric and sequence of thought which violates the expectations of the native reader” (13). His research is incomplete, but he says that continued research is needed in the field he founded.

Ulla Connor in *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing* outlines five domains in the field of CR: text linguistics, the study of writing as cultural activity, classroom dynamics of L2 writing, variety of genres in variety of situations for variety of purposes, different cultural intellectual traditions and

ideologies (19). *Text linguistics* goes beyond the sentence level and is concerned with processes that readers and writers go through to comprehend and produce texts. For example, Chinese, Japanese and Thai favor ‘quasi-inductive’ rather than deductive or inductive style, which is called ‘delayed introduction of purpose’ (20). *Cultural activity* includes societal influences, such as oral traditions and formal education on writing. “In China, the purpose of education is to teach moral principles reflecting basic social values, such as patriotism, the collective good and respect for authority” (22). *Classroom dynamics* in the west is tripartite: teacher initiates, student replies, teacher evaluates (23). CR has focused mainly on expository writing, so *genre analysis* is valuable because other genres, such as persuasion or argumentation, need more attention (24). *Teaching an ideology*, such as the direct, linear Anglo method, can cause students to look down upon their L1 styles or consider them inferior. Although many studies advocate the social epistemic model where students contribute to the construction of meanings, L2 teachers have by and large resisted the social nature of language as they have been trained that linguistics is an objective science, not influenced by feelings or subjectivity. Further complications with ideological instruction arise because teachers want to help students be able to communicate in their academic discourse communities, which is often in conflict with their native rhetorical stances and approaches. English is used by more people than any other language, but its mother tongue speakers make up only a fraction of the estimated one billion English users in the world. Native English speakers number about 350 million while another 700-750 million use English for commerce, industry, science or other purposes. Obviously, the majority of learners are being taught English by non-

native speakers (17) outside the United States where power structures are different from the capitalistic-democratic west (25).

Kaplan was the first to go beyond the sentence level and argue that the paragraph be the basic unit of rhetorical analysis (30). This is a bold move against Bloomfield's 1933 theory that views the sentence as the basic unit of syntax countered Aristotle, who says the word is the basic unit of syntactical analysis (31). Connor explains that Kaplan bases his textual analysis on the discourse block. "Instead of examining paragraph level organization of texts, contrastive rhetorics more and more are designed to compare discourse level features of texts such as superstructures and theme relationships" (*Cross-Cultural Aspects* 97). A key aspect of CR for Kaplan is this fact:

spoken language is primarily an innate, biologically determined ability; writing, on the other hand, is a 'post-biological' step and obviously is not universal to all people. It is, he claimed, the invention of literacy that allows the search for truth in terms of cultural universals and particulars.

(100)

Connor further elaborates that *text linguistics* shows that different cultures have different expectations of writing because different cultures promote different reader expectations (166).

According to Ward Goodenough, cultural values are based on 'mental programs', which are developed in childhood and re-enforced through the culture's dominant value system (Connor, *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects* 120). Helen Gay Fitzgerald in *How Different Are We?* perceives the problem not so much when societies have different values, but when societies have different hierarchies of values and there

are conflicts on which values are more important. People judge others by the basis of their own value systems (22) and tend to consider those who do not share the same priorities as inferior. She defines culture as being “whatever one has to know, or profess to believe, in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members in every role that they accept for anyone of themselves” (21) and identifies three levels of programming: universal (inherited), individual personality (unique mix of heredity & environment) and cultural (learned). Values form the heart of culture. Fitzgerald believes that “values are enduring attitudes about the preferability of one belief over another” (21) and she goes on to describe values as “the social guideposts that show us the cultural norms of our society and specify in large measure the ways in which we should behave” (21). She also discusses hierarchical vs egalitarian societies, the most obvious examples being China and North America, as well as vertical and horizontal power structures. Usually, collective cultures tend to have hierarchical, vertical power structures while individualistic cultures lean more towards egalitarian, horizontal structures (24). Southern Europe is an exception as it tends to be a horizontal collectivist culture.

The hierarchical and egalitarian distinction is valuable in that it brings to mind the differences between cultures, thought processes and writing styles. Although some literacy groups are less skillful at certain cognitive tasks, one should not draw an overall conclusion concerning a particular culture’s thought patterns (104). Connor refers to studies comparing Caucasian and African American working class and middle class families in South Carolina and has discovered that “townspeople structured their socialization with children to include extended narratives” (106) and taught sharing new concepts and ‘turn taking’ in conversation, which is important at school. Thus, middle



class urban children are more prepared for academia than lower class, rural groups, due to how their parents interact with them in home environments. Heath explains that what constitutes 'good' writing is cultural and how writing is taught depends on how the teacher or reader defines 'good' as much, or more so, than the student's text (107). Ulla Connor in "Contrastive Rhetoric Redefined" examines how changes in definitions of culture, literacy and critical pedagogy must be reflected in CR. Traditionally, culture has been identified as being linked to geographical and nationalistic boundaries and has been considered as fixed and unchanging. However, post-modern thought perceives cultures as "individuals in groups that are undergoing continuous change" (76). Likewise, CR needs to perceive "writers as individuals that are undergoing continuous change" (76), rather than the Other or a separate cultural group. Literacy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century is "seen as a sociocognitive dynamic activity rather than a measurable skill" (77), which includes textual, discourse and social analysis. Traditional CR examines the first two, textual and discourse, but neglects the social aspect, which includes ideology and power. Actually, literacy is a complex interaction between writing and speech and is necessary for the socialization of cultural conventions. In order to be effective, CR must address the social aspect of literacy. Critical pedagogy, or discourse analysis, deals with the dangers of re-enforcing existing power roles.

Critics say CR teaches NNW to write for NW expectations instead of expressing their native linguistic and cultural identities. Connor disagrees and argues that teachers need to teach students the expectations of readers in order for NNW to communicate effectively in English. Connor explains that the 1970s witnessed the rise of process writing while the 1980s brought social construction to the forefront ("Contrastive

Rhetoric: Old and New Directions” 6). Connor explains that “all groups engage in a variety of types of writing, each with its own conventions and tendencies” (9). The preferred patterns of writing depend on the genre.

In *Contrastive Rhetoric Revisited and Redefined*, Clay Gilliam Panetta points out that “contrastive rhetoric has moved from examining only products to studying processes in a variety of writing situations” (6) and highlights the need for the field to address historical, social, economic and political variables within cultures and not simply linguistic concerns. Rather than replacing existing pedagogies, she suggests incorporating CR alongside classroom practices and be sure NNW know there is not one ‘American’ approach to writing. For example, journals are an excellent assignment applying the principles of the expressivist theory. Rather than replacing the existing practice, journals could be enhanced by providing opportunities for NNW to write first directly in English, then have them compose the same information in their native languages, and then transliterate into English. Although transliteration is usually discouraged, it can serve as a learning tool if students then reflect on and consider what makes the transliteration different from their writing in English directly.

Below is a poem by Li Bai, the most prolific Tang Dynasty poet, first in Mandarin, then Pinyin (Romanized phonetic representation of Chinese characters) and as relatively close as possible, a word-for-word transliteration followed by a popular translation into English. The Mandarin characters are not the simplified version that Mao incorporated in the 1950s, but are the ancient style and the poem reads right to left, top to bottom. The far right column is the title and author’s name.

送孟浩然之廣陵李白  
故人西辭黃鶴樓  
煙花三月下揚州  
孤帆遠影碧空盡  
惟見長江天際流

A pinyin version:

song meng hao ran zhi guang ling

li bai

gu ren xi ci huang he lou

yan hua san yue xia yang zhou

gu fan yuan ying bi shan jin

wei jian chang jiang tian ji liu

A transliteration:

Sending off / Meng / Hao / Ran / towards / Guang / Lin / Li Bai

Old / chap (old friend) / west / departs / Yellow / Crane / Tower

Mist (smoke, haze) / flowers / third / month / down / Yang / zhou

Single (lonely) / sail / distant / scene / blue / hills / limitless

Only / see / Long / River (i.e. Yangzi River) / sky / horizon / flow

Of course, there are numerous potential translations into English and often translation depends on *purpose*. Some translations are literal, others interpretive, and some contemplative. A translation widely considered to be an accurate representation into English appears below:

*Goodbye to a Friend*

My old friend said goodbye to the west,  
Here at Yellow Crane Tower,  
In the third month's cloud of willow blossoms,  
He's going down to Yangzhou.  
The lonely sail is a distant shadow,  
On the edge of a blue emptiness,  
All I see is the Yangtze River flow to the  
Far horizon.

According to Francis Chin, there is significant difference between the transliteration and translation and much of the movement between the two involves whether the translator chooses to add words to the minimum required or leave out words to place more emphasis on reader interpretation (*Translating Li Bai*). There are always nuances, especially in poetry, that cannot be translated. The point is that NNW can benefit through comparing transliterations with how they communicate when thinking in English directly. Of course, I do not recommend transliteration as a way to acquire English, but it can be a useful CR tool when utilized appropriately in order to help students compare and

subsequently improve rhetorical effects. I agree with Panetta as she states, “not all assignments will reflect the instruction they received in first-year composition” (11) and we should prepare students, especially NNW, for writing beyond the English-oriented composition classroom. First Year composition is almost always taught by English faculty and so is designed around what instructors with degrees in English consider to be effective writing; however, the majority of students are not English majors. CR helps prepare NNW for whatever styles or genres of writing they are required to engage and produce and functions at a deeper level of language interaction and acquisition because it goes beyond the level of prescriptive rules.

Anne Bliss, in “Rhetorical Structures for Multilingual and Multicultural Students”, addresses how effective communication involves more than syntax, but also includes logical connections between organized sets of information. She writes that these connections must be sequenced chronologically, psychologically or rhetorically. Bliss indicates that most assignments involve either descriptive or persuasive writing, and NNW do fairly well on descriptive because it generally consists of regurgitating facts learned or observed, but have difficulty with persuasive writing as it involves a more complex mix of genre, format and approach (16). In my understanding, the greatest disparity in writing effectiveness between NW and NNW is with argument and persuasion because it is in these types of discourse that rhetorical approaches acquire increased significance. According to Bliss, teaching NNW how to use inductive and deductive logic in their writing will help them use the English language more effectively (20), but I believe this is an oversimplification of the issue. For decades, L2 instructors

have tried to drill into NNW how to ‘think’ like NW and compose in an inductive or deductive linear fashion, with limited to no success.

Many NNW do not want to ‘join’ the opposition culturally, but learn English only for economic reasons. My experience confirms this observation because Chinese students generally are afraid of losing their culture by totally embracing and becoming fluent in English, yet a certain level of proficiency is necessary in order to increase potentials of acquiring higher salaries, more desirable working conditions and overall increased standards of living. In “Contrastive Rhetoric and Resistance to Writing”, Jan Corbett refers to Bakhtin’s *Dialogic Imagination* for support in order to help students understand language as a living socio-economic entity in order to help them navigate conflicting ideologies inherent in language and discourse (35) while Ulla Connor and Ana I. Moreno in “Tertium Comparationis: A Vital Component in Contrastive Rhetoric Research” point out that CR is based on the idea that language and writing are cultural and different cultures have different rhetorical tendencies. Linguistic analysis was used the first two decades of CR research, but today the social aspects and reader expectations gain more attention. Connor and Moreno propose a common platform of comparison. The common ground needs to exist on the conceptual as well as linguistic level and examines L1 as well as L2 texts. As Maria Estela Brisk and Margaret M. Harrington state in *Literacy and Bilingualism*:

a third grade Chinese student who was quite capable of reading and understanding a third grade level story in English about family members who sat down for a lunch of steamed rice was confused and unable to read

when presented with a first grade level story in English about children making rock stew. (8)

In this example, the problem is not unfamiliarity with the language, but a lack of prior (cultural) knowledge. The common platform Connor and Moreno propose involves leveling the playing field as much as possible by comparing, contrasting and evaluating similar circumstances, subject matter and genre.

Kaplan's original study examined 600 essays, all of which were already products, and the study did not consider the variables in their composition (157). Genre and subject matter should be consistent when comparing texts from different cultures. Carol Severino in "The Doodles In Context: Qualifying Claims About Contrastive Rhetoric" states that Kaplan's research has many problems, such he does not take into account differences in genre, backgrounds or previous writing instruction and he speaks of 'Oriental rhetoric' while Asia is comprised of over fifty languages (46). From personal experience, I know that China and India alone have more than fifty mutually unintelligible languages or dialects within each country, not to mention other nationalities along the Pacific Rim. Severino argues that Kaplan claims to examine thought processes, but he actually focuses on the arrangement of texts instead of the invention and steps involved in their composition. She contends that he does not study how cultures influence texts based on differing approaches to audience or purposes of writing, which is the essence of CR (50). Connor lists three audiences: the author, those the author explicitly addresses, and the universal audience. The strategies used in written discourse are determined by type of audience to be engaged. The universal audience provides the norms for objective argumentation and the notion of a universal audience is created by cultural experiences

and beliefs (*Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects* 69). CR is further complicated by the fact that each individual and culture potentially has their own universal audiences.

Besides those who wish to develop Kaplan's original thesis, there are critics of CR. For example, in "Toward a Model of Transculturation", Vivian Zamel criticizes CR and argues that the "tendency of CR is to view cultures as discrete, discontinuous and predictable" (14), while Ron Scollon's article "Contrastive Rhetoric, Contrastive Poetics, or Perhaps Something Else?" argues that CR is too much about texts and not enough about oral language (14). Ryuko Kubota's article "Japanese Culture Constructed by Discourses: Implications for Applied Linguistics Research and ELT" proposes that CR advocates the superiority of the west (14). According to Kubota, the different criticisms derive from their differing perspectives. Zamel comes from process and individual expression backgrounds. Scollon comes from anthropology while Kubota examines from critical pedagogy (14). Connor indicates that regardless of the critical perspective, the future of CR needs to see writers not as part of static cultures, but as individuals within social groups undergoing constant change (16). CR is criticized for not embracing experimentation (only doing surveys, text analyses, prediction studies and reflective inquiries) and so not producing results for teaching practice. According to Connor, too small samples, validity and quality of CR research is questioned (*Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects* 162).

In my opinion, Kaplan must be credited for his innovation in the field and should not be blamed too strongly, because it is the responsibility of later scholars to examine, evaluate and build upon what he began. Unfortunately, due to its convenience and simplistic nature, his diagram is still popular as an instructional tool in its original state.



When I left China in August of 2008, my colleagues were still showing students the 1966 version of Kaplan's Doodles, explaining to them how they fit into the scenario and what they must do to successfully write in English. If instructors and scholars only parrot concepts from over forty years ago, Kaplan's ideas will lose their value. Even though she is slightly harsh and I believe incorrect in her assumption that Kaplan promotes the superiority of western English, Severino is on the right track with her critical assessment of Kaplan's Doodles in search of improvement. She recognizes the shortcomings and limitations of the original study, such as Kaplan only considered finished products and there was no evaluation concerning other influences on CR, such as socio-economic backgrounds, gender or genre. Severino exposes the need to delve deeper into CR in order to acquire the greatest scholarly and pedagogical benefits possible. Ulla Connor realizes the crucial aspect of CR is that it compares discourse level features such as superstructures and theme relationships (*Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects* 97). To contrast, or compare, grammar, syntax and semantics of different languages is not enough. Linguists and instructors must dig deeper into the cultural issues that influence the rhetoric of NW and I suggest that heteroglossia, or examining and interpreting how conflicting ideologies are negotiated through individual and institutional voices interacting with each other only find genuine expression within a concrete situation, or theme.

Current deficiencies in CR research include small sample sizes, mixture of genres, generalizing and accusations of ethnocentrism and a lack of adequate levels of comparability (Connor, *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects* 162). Actually, most do not consider CR as a teaching method, but as an inquiry to provide a knowledge

base to help L2 teachers and students (166). Connor asserts, “writing involves more than the generation, organization and translation of ideas” (18) and insists we must also consider the context, writer and reader when examining rhetorical conventions.

Some suggestions put forth by Connor are that CR needs to be sensitive to feminist and minority concerns (173) as the original study does not take gender into account. Also, originally CR examined writing only at one point in time and it needs to examine diachronically. For example CR should compare sample writings that span a period of ten years, rather than just one (18). As Kaplan points out in his original study, “Rhetoric...varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture” (“Cultural Thought Patterns” 12), indicating that Kaplan realized continued research into the field would be necessary. Finally, the future of CR needs to consider new media, such as visual literacy, which has developed by leaps and bounds since the introduction of CR in the mid-1960s. I have much anecdotal support based on several years’ experience teaching abroad, and in my Analysis of Research, I include a case study of a Japanese student I taught in a BW class at Appalachian State University to further reinforce my thesis.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH: A CASE STUDY

Although Kaplan's original study contains value, it is too simplistic and limited. For example, it cannot be said unequivocally that all Asians write in a circular fashion or that all Romance Language writers are digressive. It is dangerous to categorize and classify cultural groups, but there is some validity in the general guidelines. One thing can be known for certain: writing transcends linguistic rules and must be engaged at the rhetorical level where culture influences thought processes. With Kaplan, the interest began to switch from the textual features to the process of writing, which has been key to the development on how best to respond to NNW in BW classes. The research reveals that in order to most effectively respond to NNW in BW classes, instructors must be aware that knowledge is socially constructed. As Edward M. White explains in *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, readers form meanings from texts and writers make meanings out of experience (97). As Peter Elbow explains in *Writing Without Teachers*, people, not words, contain meanings (151). Words have meanings attributed to them, so "language only consists of a set of directions for building meanings out of one's own head" (152). I agree with Elbow because various interpretations, meanings and applications can arise from the exact same text when read by different people, so obviously meaning does not reside independently in the linguistic forms, but within socially constructed individual minds. Since this is the case, I am convinced that instructors need to appreciate the rich experience NNW bring to the classroom as they reflect on their students' writing as it communicates meanings from diverse perspectives.

According to Kathleen Blake Yancey, “reflection is going beyond the text to include a sense of the ongoing conversations that texts enter into” (*Reflection in the Writing Classroom* 5). She organizes reflection in composition into the three concepts of *reflection in action*, *constructive reflection* and *reflection in presentation* (14). Reflection in action involves the initial review of the paper and revisions while the constructive reflection deals with acquiring and negotiating multiple voices in the composition process. Constructive reflection is, in my opinion, the most crucial aspect of the writing process because it is here that first drafts evolve into final ones. For example, constructive reflection can entail taking spontaneous free writing and working it into more substantial, meaningful prose. The negotiation of ideas involves how the author interacts with the text he or she is producing and in genuine composition, fresh ideas are generated through the interaction, rather than simply consisting of a graphic representation of what is already in the author’s mind. Through this interaction, I propose, the text is alive and organic and acquires increased potential for communication as the author views the writing not only as the writer, but as a reader as well. The author-reader dichotomy transpiring during the composition process *is* constructive reflection and is the means by which disorganized, chaotic ideas find coherence and possess the agency to share their meanings with other. Constructive reflection not only involves the internal dialogue of the author, but also reflections from external sources, such as other readers and cultural, or rhetorical, expectations. The reflection in presentation involves the fine tuning of communication to a specific audience within a specific context. NNW should especially focus on developing the constructive reflection aspect as they can contribute multivocality to greater degrees than NS. Yancey also discusses the lived,

delivered and experienced curriculums evident in classrooms. The “lived” being what the students bring with them, “delivered” is what the instructor and institution prepares, and “experienced” is the interaction between the two (18). “Reflection is the dialectical process by which we develop and achieve, first, specific goals for learning; second, strategies for reaching those goals; and third, means of determining whether or not we have met those goals or other goals” (6). Reflection, according to Yancey, transforms the mind (12). She states that literacy is highly contextual (171) and that literacy is connected to meaning-making (175).

In my opinion, Yancey’s concept of the ‘lived curriculum’ plays a significant role in education as it becomes the ‘experienced curriculum’. The experienced curriculum is when the individual students encounter the formal ‘delivered curriculum’ and the teacher’s unique identity is the catalyst through which learning may transpire. Some instructors are talkative and some are quiet, and just as students have different learning styles, instructors have different teaching styles. On another level, issues such as sexual interests, political affiliations and overall aspects of the individual teacher’s behavior and personality interact with the dynamics of each classroom, which in turn influence the experienced curriculums. Even if making a concerted effort to keep personal opinion and politics out of the classroom, an instructor cannot, and should not, totally remove the self from the classroom, so instructor identity inevitably plays a part in how and if students learn. As writing is not only cognitive, but is also social and exists within certain cultural and rhetorical contexts, the types of feedback given are extremely important. Which draft the instructor is responding to is of primary importance. Even for NNW, an early draft should not involve editing or mechanical comments. Responses focusing on mechanics

should be saved until the final draft or finished product. There is no reason to edit a sentence if the entire paragraph or section of the paper is going to be revised, so early comments should be process-oriented and only final draft responses geared toward the product, which also protects against teachers taking too much authority from the students' writing.

There are as many ways to respond to student writing as there are teachers, and a key shift in the methods of responses coincides with shifts in reading theories and pedagogies. James Berlin in "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Classroom" argues that rhetoric is never truly independent of economic, social or political structures; and states, "rhetoric can never be innocent, can never be a disinterested arbiter of the ideological claims of others because it is always already serving certain ideological claims" (717). He discusses the *cognitive psychology*, *expressionism* and *social epistemic* rhetoric. Cognitive rhetoric, what Berlin calls the heir of Current Traditionalist rhetoric, claims scientific objectivity, but he does not agree with cognitive rhetoric as a guide to respond to student writing because "the business of cognitive psychology is to enable us to learn to think in a way that will realize goals, not deliberate about their value" (723). Although cognitive rhetoric pretends to be free of ideological influences, Berlin argues that it is in fact a product of goal-oriented corporate capitalism.

He believes expressionistic rhetoric has more value than cognitive, but still falls short of being free from ideology (727). Peter Elbow and Donald Murray are two strong proponents of expressionism, placing emphasis on finding one's own voice in writing, which is very conducive to the individualistic American society, especially with the underlying conviction that privately determined truths connect to genuine truths of others.

Berlin argues that expressionism encourages the individual's challenge to authority for the sake of personal gain and the ruling elite encourages this mentality because if someone remains among the lower classes, according to expressionistic rhetoric, then it is because he or she is unwilling to put forth the effort to pursue personal visions and ambitions. Economic or social restraints are not responsible for oppression, but according to Berlin, the increased alienation between self and Other is enhanced due to the highly individualistic nature of expressionistic rhetoric, resulting in "self fulfillment and self-discovery taking place away from the job" (729). The separation of work from authentic self is another avenue to support capitalistic ideologies. In my opinion, Berlin is attempting to equate expressionistic rhetoric with early 19<sup>th</sup> Century capitalistic ideologies, which is a stretch. Proponents of expressionistic rhetoric are not synonymous with captains of industry who exploit labor for the development of personal creativity. I agree with Berlin that expressionism has weaknesses and downfalls and that language is a social construct, but disagree that expressionistic rhetoric encourages the domination of the elite. In my opinion, he is making questionable and insufficiently supported statements to defend his pre-conceived conclusion that Social Epistemic is the best pedagogy.

Social Epistemic rhetoric realizes that knowledge comes into existence within ideological conflicts, and interpretations must constantly be revised in the interest of greater participation (730), which is in line with Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, and how outer speech becomes inner speech and ideological becoming. Since knowledge and language are socially constructed, neither cognitive nor expressive rhetorics provide substantial guidelines for instructors to respond to students, especially NNW in BW

classes. As Berlin points out, Social Epistemic rhetoric “inevitably supports economic, social, political, and cultural democracy” (732). In my opinion, these values should be emulated in the BW classroom and influence how instructors respond to NNW because the Social Epistemic model is the only one of the three that genuinely recognizes and values the different political and cultural climates that NNW bring to the class.

Influenced by cognitive rhetoric, teachers often ‘objectively’ evaluate student papers, marking ‘errors’ that needed to be corrected in order to make them better, which fosters a negative atmosphere in that it stresses what is ‘wrong’ instead of examining thought processes or potential areas for revision. In a nutshell, negative comments usually focus on error while positive comments tend to focus on meaning. Although I agree with Berlin that Social Epistemic rhetoric is currently the best model, I believe Expressionistic rhetoric offers valuable contributions and insights which are beneficial concerning how best to respond to NNW in BW classes.

In *Writing Without Teachers*, Elbow discusses the ‘believing game’ and argues that it is not good that the academy has bought wholesale into the ‘doubting game’, viewing skepticism and critical thinking as synonymous. As Elbow points out, current instruction states that critical thinking involves objectively following evidence and attempting to suspend personal prejudices and assumptions in order to arrive at the best possible explanation and is usually considered skeptical, which involves willingness to doubt or question everything before a decision is made concerning the validity of the assertions, premises or conclusions. Skepticism is a very crucial ingredient for critical thinking, but according to Elbow it has been overdone and he points out that ‘doubting’ is only one perspective in the quest towards truth (148). He theorizes that before the modern



era, people tended to take the opposite approach and *believe* everything, then assimilate similarities to ascertain the most plausible explanation. Although this approach is faulty, the post-Enlightenment strategy to doubt *everything* is equally insufficient when utilized exclusively. Thinkers such as Hume, Kant and Descartes further advanced the notion that unless someone is being skeptical and questioning everything, he or she is not practicing intellectual inquiry. Socrates is regarded as a doubter, but often when he came to a decisive conclusion, “he relinquished the doubting game and logical dialectic, and turned to myth, metaphor, and allegory (150), emphasizing the *believing* aspect of his inquiries. Elbow calls for a compromise between the two extremes of believing too much and doubting too much. In the current academic environment, the pendulum needs to swing more towards what Elbow calls the ‘believing game’ in order to achieve balance in critical assessment (151). I perceive that the ‘believing game’ results in increased opportunities for students and instructors to construct and form connections of meanings which otherwise appear unrelated, improving abilities to negotiate multiple meanings, which inevitably results in improved writing. Anytime multiple perspectives, or meanings, can be entertained during the composition process, potentials for increased learning, more effective understandings and communication arise. Negotiating meanings is especially significant for NNW as they come from environments very different than mainstream, SAE. Even many NW, such as African Americans, Generation 1.5 immigrants, whose parents do not communicate in English, and individuals with regional dialects in various parts of the country, often have difficulty with academic English and this challenge is amplified for NNW because their native environments are totally different linguistically and rhetorically. Although many NNW come from cultures that

value authoritarian classrooms, and are unfamiliar with expressivist, process pedagogy, responses can be tailored to meet their needs if done in response to the students' writing and not an artificially designed, prescribed formula, which assumes the students are familiar with process or expressivist pedagogy. Based on my experience with Central American and Chinese students, product pedagogy is the dominant technique the students experience prior to coming to America. Instructors can take additional time to explain and model expressivist, or whichever pedagogy they use, in the classroom to increase the chances that NNW will understand and better participate in exercises and assignments. I have found that explaining the reasons behind assignments helps tremendously for NW, and even more so for NNW, concerning motivation and comprehension. If students understand *why* they are being asked to accomplish a task, it acquires purpose and is not just busy work to pass the class. For example, some students do not know why free writing is necessary. They do not even get a grade for their efforts. However, after I had students read information explaining the value of free writing and discussed the issue in class, they became more diligent and interested in the assignment. Student education must begin with instructor education. One way to improve the effectiveness of NNW BW instructors is to have ongoing workshops where they are exposed to ideas such as Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia and discuss among themselves potential applications. There is no reason that instructors as well as students cannot be enriched through the NNW BW class experience.

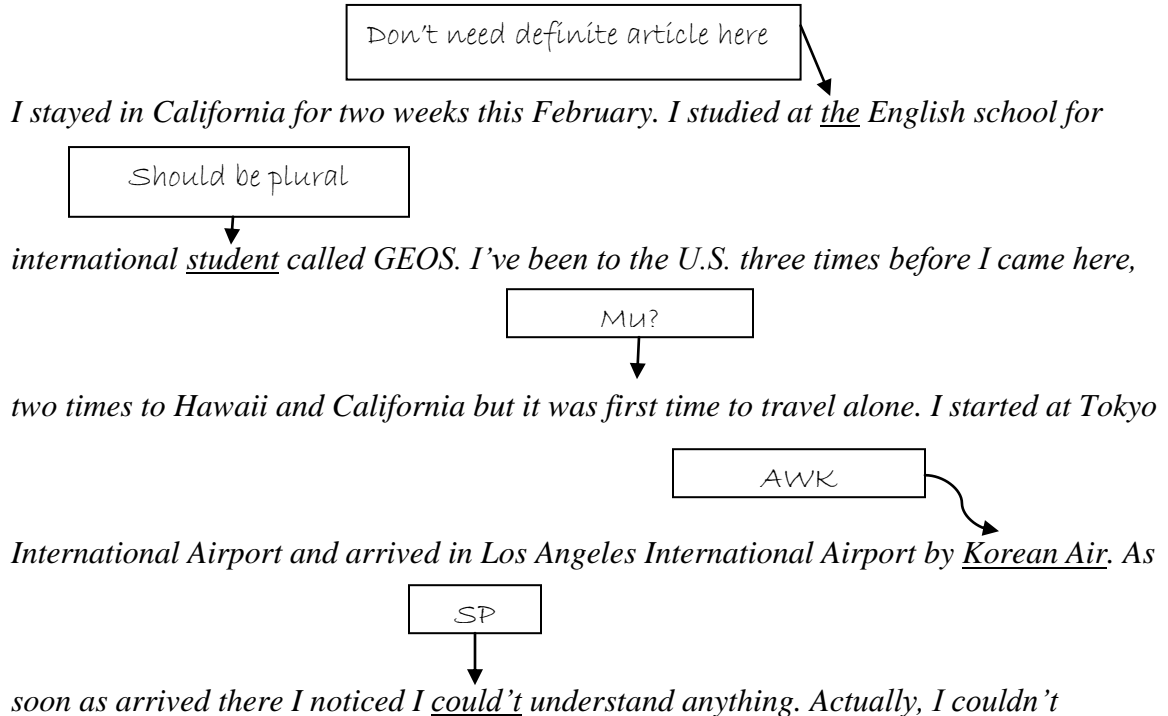
As Joy Reid points out, instructors do need to be more directive with NNW than with NW, especially early in the semester, but as the semester progresses, comments can be tailored to better fit individual needs (214). She recommends more generic, directive

comments early on because the students are strangers and the instructor does not really know individual student needs. Paul Kei Matsuda follows suit and explains that instructors will be better able to respond effectively if they learn about NNW personal circumstances as much as possible (“A Dynamic Model of L2 Writing” 252). A visual representation of Matsuda’s Dynamic Model of L2 Writing appears in Appendix E. A start could be a survey as suggested by Reid, (Appendix D), in order to better learn the students’ educational backgrounds and whether they are incipient or functional and elective or circumstantial bilinguals as described by Valdéz. Educators must remember that students do not just learn to write, but also write to learn, so developing reading and rhetorical skills goes hand in hand with effective responses to NNW in BW classes. Leki brings up the fact that most L2 textbooks have short reading passages that have comprehension questions at the end asking students to ‘find’ the main point or supporting ideas (Reciprocal Themes 179). Based on my experience as an IELTS and TOEFL examiner, placement exams have students ‘skim’ or ‘scan’ for information in a short amount of time to determine their proficiency. While skimming is reading quickly to see how much information can be gained, scanning is seeking particular information in the text in a short amount of time; however, neither is a realistic way to read or check comprehension. As Leki points out, predictive reading should be practiced (182). For example, NNW should be given a paragraph or section of an article to read and then be asked to comment on how they think the story or argument will progress, then be given the remainder to discuss why the author did or did not fulfill their expectations. Predictive reading simultaneously develops students’ reading and writing skills as they learn rhetorical conventions from skilled authors.

According to John T. Gage in his article “On Rhetoric and Composition”, “rhetoric involves the aspects of the work that may be assumed to have been under the control of an author for the purpose of attaining some end” (29). Since the purpose of rhetoric is to attain an end, then the author should have immense control over the syntactic and semantic connections. Therefore, grammar instruction should not interfere with the purpose intended by the author, and NNW in BW classes should be given significant free reign in earlier drafts (Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers* 34). Unless the errors interfere with meaning, they first should be overlooked and the students should be encouraged to continue inventing and revising (Shaughnessy 12). Elbow and many contemporary theorists believe meaning resides in minds, and not in texts and that language is simply a system of organization through which to communicate thought. Therefore, Elbow advocates a leveling of authority in the classroom, encouraging students to discover and develop their unique ‘voices’, primarily through expressive writing, which in turn will yield more sophisticated academic discourse. The more sophisticated discourse arises through allowing spontaneous ideas to flow onto the page because, according to Elbow, language in our minds at the subconscious level is extremely advanced compared to what we can generate through cognitive awareness. Attempting to organize thoughts in advance of putting pen to paper hinders writing and results in less effective communication. Also, expressive writing better ensures students have authority of their writing and they are not simply writing for the teacher or about a topic on which the instructor is an expert. Giving students authority over their own writing is key, and Elbow stresses the importance of uninhibited, spontaneous writing which may later be reviewed and revised into more coherent communication (42).

Organization and polish can come later, and new meanings may arise as the author continues to interact with what he or she has written. Highly personal writing encourages the students to assume authority for their texts. However, the lessening of teacher authority in the classroom can pose a problem for NNW, as many come from cultures that value teacher-centered instruction instead of student-centered learning and are unfamiliar with process or expressive style writing. Based on my readings and experience, a combination of Expressionistic and Social Epistemic rhetorics, several aspects of which are harmonious to heteroglossia, are the best theoretical underpinnings to guide instructors as they interact with and respond to NNW in BW classes.

Below is an excerpt from Aiko, a Japanese student in my most recent BW class, with hypothetical, but what I consider to be traditional, feedback from an hypothetical instructor that focuses on the end product and often appears on a graded paper:



*understand the announcement in the airplane, but I thought the captain's pronunciation*

*was the problem. Unfortunately, the problem was in myself. The customs officer asked me*

Not necessary

Indefinite article

*some questions, but I couldn't answer well. Fortunately, he was really nice guy and*

*spoke slowly for me, and struggled to understand my poor English.*

As you can see, the responses focus on 'correct' English, or superficial grammatical concerns. Instead, it is more conducive to learning for the instructor to ask questions and stimulate the student to engage the writing more from rhetorical perspectives. For example, Aiko writes expecting the bulk of meaning to be interpreted by the reader instead of made explicit by the author, rhetorical strategies in Japanese and English respectively. Below is the same excerpt with some potentially more useful responses:

*I stayed in California for two weeks this February. I studied at the English school for*

You may be able to combine these first three sentences into one sentence.

*international student called GEOS. I've been to the U.S. three times before I came here,*

Perhaps you could organize paragraph chronologically.

*two times to Hawaii and California but it was first time to travel alone. I started at Tokyo*

*International Airport and arrived in Los Angeles International Airport by Korean Air. As*

*soon as arrived there I noticed I couldn't understand anything. Actually, I couldn't*

*understand the announcement in the airplane, but I thought the captain's pronunciation*

How did you know what to do if you couldn't understand the announcement?

*was the problem. Unfortunately, the problem was in myself. The customs officer asked me*

When did you realize it was your problem and not the captain's? How?

*some questions, but I couldn't answer well. Fortunately, he was really nice guy and*

Do you remember anything else about him, such as height, weight, dress?

*spoke slowly for me, and struggled to understand my poor English.*

These responses are geared towards a first draft, which is what this excerpt is, with the goal to encourage thought and consider ways to develop and expand statements. Also, a method of organization, chronological, is suggested, which is an easier mode for NNW to learn. Once chronological organization is mastered, then more advanced techniques, such as psychological or rhetorical, can be entertained. A key problem is that many instructors respond to first drafts as if they are in the final editing stages, such as pointing out spelling errors, taking the students' focus off communicating content and deeper nuances of meanings, forcing them to concentrate on superficial grammar errors and improve their writing no further. I had asked Aiko to read Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* and a section of his response is below:

Incorrect use of definite article.

*The thing that I thought in the Elbow is exactly good book for me. It's not difficult but*

AWK.

there is a lot of helpful information to write. I've heard of "freewriting", and I tried it but

I couldn't write well and gave it up just doing it for two days. And I just wrote like "yes,

no, I can't, I think...." It's not sentence at all. According to this book, sometimes editing

the sentence is not good, but anyway my English skill is so bad and I don't mind making

Incorrect use of definite article.

?

mistakes. Just outputting English will contribute to improving my skill in writing. And I

Poor parallel structure.

think outputting on paper or computer (like Microsoft Word or PowerPoint) will also be

good for speaking skill especially in vocabulary. So I'll do freewriting if I have free time

Repetitive.

Weak use of adverb.

little by little. And I need to check what I write to build the vocabulary certainly.

Below is a sample of the same piece of writing by Aiko with what I consider to be feedback designed to stimulate thought rather than simply point out errors:

Explain more about how Writing Without Teachers is useful for you.

The thing that I thought in the Elbow is exactly good book for me. It's not difficult but



What type of helpful information? For example....

there is a lot of helpful information to write. I've heard of "freewriting", and I tried it but

I couldn't write well and gave it up just doing it for two days. And I just wrote like "yes,

no, I can't, I think...." It's not sentence at all. According to this book, sometimes editing

the sentence is not good, but anyway my English skill is so bad and I don't mind making

mistakes. Just outputting English will contribute to improving my skill in writing. And I

Has Elbow changed the way you view writing? If so, how?

think outputting on paper or computer (like Microsoft Word or PowerPoint) will also be

Any disadvantages of MSWord or is writing electronically always better than handwriting? Ppt. & speaking skills may fit better in another paragraph.

good for speaking skill especially in vocabulary. So I'll do freewriting if I have free time

Perhaps you could have a transition sentence leading from writing Elbow style to spoken applications and ppt. presentations.

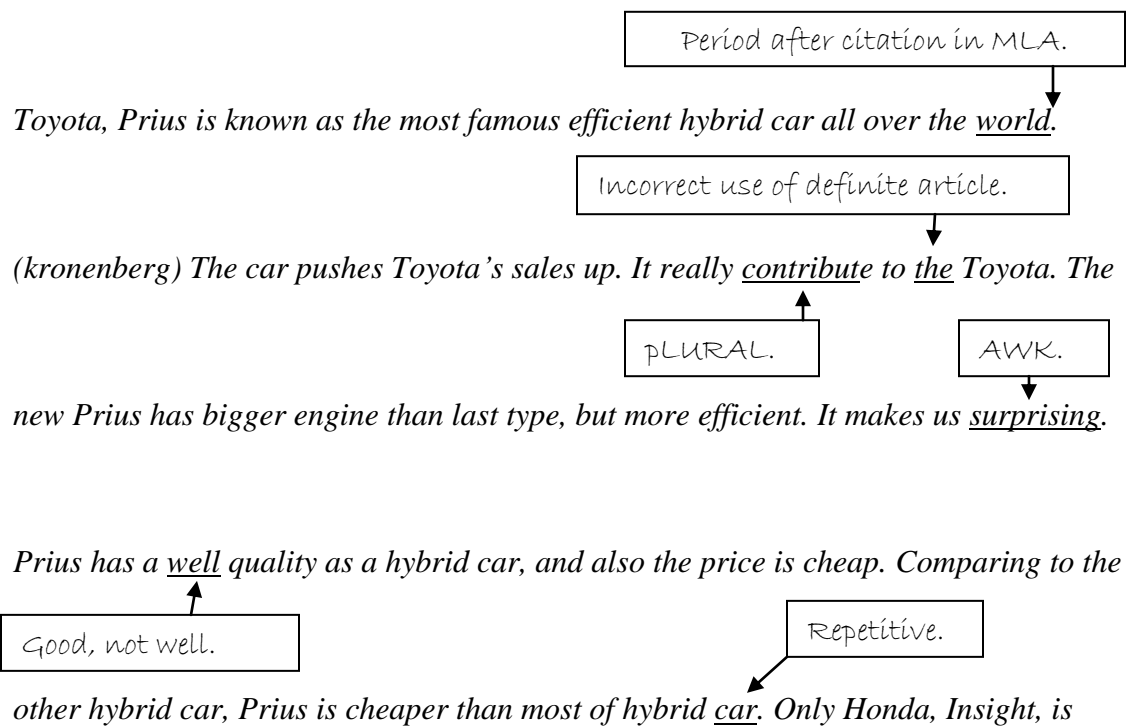
little by little. And I need to check what I write to build the vocabulary certainly.

You may be able to say this more effectively.

Could you explain this more? Are you talking about editing stage or revision?

The first sample is from a personal narrative, the second from responding to reading, which is slightly more advanced as Aiko has to assimilate new material and communicate

it seasoned with his own words and style. When utilizing CR to respond to NNW, genre is important. The lack of study in CR concerning different genres is what I consider to be a key weakness in CR theory. Although much has been done since Kaplan, there remains scant research concerning contrasting rhetorics of comparable genres of different languages and cultures. For example, we can no longer say that Asians are circular whether writing narrative, expository essays or critical responses, but each particular situation needs additional interpretation, assessment and evaluation in order to better know how to respond effectively when the NNW is communicating in English, which likewise has multiple rhetorics, depending on the genre and purpose of the writing. The next sample is from a formal business paper which the professor stipulated must be objective. First, I will present typical feedback, then more of the type this study recommends:



Not necessary.

*cheaper than new Prius, though. But still, Prius has economically-friendly and*

Plural

*ecologically-friendly feature. Their first mover advantage on hybrid car field is really*

*strong. Because they can gain a lot of profit from the sales and develop the car by using*

FRAG.

*that money. The sales will help Toyota to be recovered from bad management condition.*

One model or many?

*However, from some article in Japan, the older model of Prius is more efficient than the*

*newest model. Toyota announces the newest Prius can run 23.6miles per LITER (89.4*

Too casual for formal paper.

Plural.

*miles per gallon). It sounds super, but actually it's impossible. Some user says it's less*

Tense agreement.

*efficient than the brochure said. The number is measured in test course owned by Toyota,*

*and professional driver was driving. So the number has luck of reality. They should*

Repetitive.

*announce the number correctly. This is the basic responsibility as a big company.*

Now, the same sample piece with feedback based on theories of heteroglossia and Social Epistemic rhetoric:

*Toyota, Prius is known as the most famous efficient hybrid car all over the world.*

*(kronenberg) The car pushes Toyota's sales up. It really contribute to the Toyota. The*

*new Prius has bigger engine than last type, but more efficient. It makes us surprising.*

*Prius has a well quality as a hybrid car, and also the price is cheap. Comparing to the*

*other hybrid car, Prius is cheaper than most of hybrid car. Only Honda, Insight, is*

Perhaps find a synonym for cheap. You use it in three sentences in a row.

*cheaper than new Prius, though. But still, Prius has economically-friendly and*

*ecologically-friendly feature. Their first mover advantage on hybrid car field is really*

I don't know what mover advantage is.

*strong. Because they can gain a lot of profit from the sales and develop the car by using*

Will making more profit improve management?

*that money. The sales will help Toyota to be recovered from bad management condition.*

"According to...". Be good to cite sources in the sentence sometimes.

*However, from some article in Japan, the older model of Prius is more efficient than the*

*newest model. Toyota announces the newest Prius can run 23.6miles per LITER (89.4*

How are the older models more efficient? What's the comparative gas mileage?

*miles per gallon). It sounds super, but actually it's impossible. Some user says it's less*

*efficient than the brochure said. The number is measured in test course owned by Toyota,*

I'm not familiar with the expression "luck of reality". Is there another way you could say this? Did Toyota intentionally lie or was it due to unrealistic conditions that gave the high MPG figure? What's the real gas mileage?

*and professional driver was driving. So the number has luck of reality. They should*

*announce the number correctly. This is the basic responsibility as a big company.*

What stood out to me reading this paragraph is there are several short, simple sentences. I suggest trying to combine some into compound and complex sentences. Remember, it's better to express an idea in one word instead of two or three.

The latter responses in each example, I argue, are more productive and helpful for the student. The 'odd' sounding aspect of Aiko's writing, especially in the last example, is his 'voice', or centrifugal forces, coming through, which often conflict with SAE and institutional centripetal forces. The heteroglossic and Social Epistemic nature of the hypothetical responses involve addressing how Aiko tries to communicate in an alien language and rhetoric in more general terms and overall formative comments. I believe less specificity is better in these situations in order to help the student work through the thought processes of revision. Being too specific early on results in students "slavishly responding to teacher comments" as Nancy Sommers indicates. Guidance, instead of direct instruction, although it makes the student struggle more, is more beneficial in the long run for the student to communicate meanings effectively. The types of responses I

advocate in the latter examples also harness the Social Epistemic, in that students better perceive that meaning making is shared with readers and is not 100% the responsibility of writers. There must be a balance between the two forces, and I suggest that during the initial stages, or drafts, grammar does not matter unless it blatantly interferes with meaning. Feedback to NNW in BW classes should focus on expressing questions raised in the instructors', or peer readers', minds in order to help the NNW understand where he or she could improve clarity, organization, cohesion and development.

Many NNW have not been taught that meaning-making is shared by writers and readers, but that meaning is an abstract entity which they strive to attain. Successful writing involves the transfer of meaning, yet meanings do not reside in language, but in people's heads. Peter Elbow in *Writing Without Teachers* explains that words in themselves do not really have meanings (152). A writer attributes meanings to words and the language simply gives directions to the readers as how to structure meanings from the syntactic and semantic relationships. Therefore, readers build new meanings from associations already in their minds as they encounter and process new information. One method to develop this meaning-building experience is proposed by Art Young in "Writing Across and Against the Curriculum": "students have learned to mimic the prose of familiar school discourse, and now to write poetry they must rethink and reform content" (475). When someone writes about science in a non-scientific language, personal connections are possible, which leads to fresh insights and innovative ways to communicate. Taking unfamiliar information and re-working it into the familiar is the best way to acquire new knowledge. Writing scientific information in lay terms "frees the imagination to reflect on experience and to engage the language in such a way that

meaning is shaped and reshaped by an active mind” (476). Likewise, designing assignments, such as Radical Revision (Appendix B) for NNW in BW classes, allows students to take unfamiliar information and re-work it into familiar. The reworking of the unfamiliar into the familiar is conducive to genuinely improving students as writers, rather than training them to mimic canonized authors.

## CONCLUSION

As Arnetha Ball states in *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy and Learning*, “writing is not simply a tool we use to express a self we already have; it is a means by which we form a self to express” (111). NNW inevitably form new identities, or undergo significant identity modifications due to communicating in a foreign country, so instructors should appreciate CR and heteroglossia, or multiple voices entering the text, which will encourage NNW to embrace and enrich their writing. Too much emphasis on pre-prescribed rules for ‘correct’ English is detrimental to NNW in BW classes, forcing the language to become a set of rules to memorize instead of an organic entity with which to interact. Responding to student writing consists not of simply final comments made by instructors, but actually begins with the original assignment and moves through the entire process, as process theory prescribes. In *Teaching and Assessing Writing* Edward M. White explains, “the great value of a good expressive topic is that it demands that the writer relate the self to knowledge, find personal meaning in external objects, and communicate internal truth to an outside reader” (119). Assignments which foster connection of the self, or expressive writing, to the larger audience, often realized through peer review, are valuable to help students appreciate and engage various rhetorics. As both instructors and students understand and appreciate how expressive writing effectively communicated results in incremental modifications and improvements in writing, students will better achieve their desired rhetorical effects.

In 1985, Michael H. Long and Patricia A. Porter in “Group Work, Interlanguage Talk, and Second Language Acquisition” stress the importance of group work among



NNW: “The predominant mode of instruction is what might be termed the lockstep, in which one person (the teacher) sets the same instructional pace and content for everyone, by lecturing, explaining a grammar point, leading drill work, or asking questions of the whole class” (Long 208). When lessons are organized in lockstep manner, the instructor talks for half or two thirds of the class period. In a fifty minute lesson, this leaves twenty-five minutes for the students, but since five to ten minutes is typically spent on administrative matters (such as calling the roll, taking up, distributing homework etc.), the total time available for students is closer to fifteen minutes. In a class of thirty students, this averages to thirty seconds per student per lesson, or one hour per year for in-class interaction, instruction and composition. Group work, which was advocated in the process approaches in the 1980s, does not entirely solve the problem, but does provide increased interaction and NNW discussion and feedback time with each other. The small group setting is more natural and closer to the real world outside the classroom than a courtroom type atmosphere created by the ‘judge’ teacher at the front of the class. Sharing of information between students is of immense benefit as they learn from each other and it helps them understand why certain phrasings are preferred and more succinct under certain circumstances. Group work also helps to individualize instruction (Long 210). Lockstep instruction ignores individual strengths and weaknesses while group work allows students and the instructors to better tailor assignments to students’ individual needs.

For example, a lockstep assignment might involve assigning the same topic to everyone in order to be fair and equal and all would be graded by the same rubric or criteria. However, this approach negates the fact that students are individuals from

diverse backgrounds and thus is not as fair and equal as it initially appears. One possible alternative is to divide the students into groups and have each group decide on a theme for the members. In this way, the topics arise from the students themselves and should be reviewed by the instructor for approval, which is much more conducive to learning because the students will write about what interests and motivates them internally. In my opinion, internal motivation produces better and more fulfilling results than external motivation, such as threats of receiving a bad grade or punitive measures. Instructors should model meaningful feedback before sending the students out on their own to suggest revisions for each others' papers.

Once the instructor models for students how to read critically and revise papers, NNW can benefit immensely from group work and peer feedback. The main reason peer feedback is not successful is because the instructor does not give adequate guidance. I developed a handout entitled "Reader Response" (Appendix A) and gave it to my most recent BW class, which contained a NNW, that worked well during in-class peer revision. Using this handout as a guide, the students gave meaningful, helpful feedback to each other and since they wrote their ideas and comments down, the original authors could have them to refer to and reflect upon later. In my experience, clear handouts providing guidance for students concerning how to give feedback to each other have been extremely successful. The goal should be able to help NNW not be dependent upon teachers to evaluate their writing, but to instill in them confidence and training to effectively revise their own papers.

Developing the ability to critically assess and evaluate their own writing will teach NNW how to implement more effective revisions and become less dependent on

outside forces telling them what is ‘correct’. Nancy Welch’s exercise, “Re-Seeing the Argument” (Appendix F), taken from her book *Getting Restless: Rethinking Revision in Writing Instruction*, helps NNW in BW classes to realize that writing is a messy process they must first work through in order to communicate in SAE. Another valuable low-stakes writing exercise based on Toby Fulwiler’s “Provocative Revision” is ‘Radical Revision’ (Appendix B). I have found Radical Revision works extremely well not only with NW but with NNW in BW classes. By discovering, switching and transforming, NNW can better experience various perspectives concerning rhetoric and how it can be implemented in English. Another successful assignment I structured around the movie *Peter Elbow on Writing* that I call “Foundations for Written Communication” (Appendix G) involves the four audiences Elbow says writers should engage in order to produce the best possible written communication. I argue that responding to student writing during the latter two stages of audience interaction through the lens of CR with an appreciation for the multivocality experienced with NNW in BW classes will train students for a lifetime of self-reflection and revision and agree with Elbow as he states that there is too much emphasis on the evaluation of writing with insufficient attention to developing writing for the other three audiences. A goal of writing is to communicate meaning, so additional time and resources should be devoted to sharing writing with others and receiving feedback from readers.

Responding to writing begins with the original assignment. Most faculty, according to White, are excellent test takers and so have trouble understanding why students sometimes do poorly on term papers or essay exams (White 100). White indicates that it is often due to the fact that assignments or questions are vague, confusing

or ill suited for the students' age or background. Some professors argue writing topics are not a good idea because they limit students and usually do not allow them to write about what is important to them and maintain that the best writing results from internal motivation and one topic cannot internally motivate an entire class of diverse students. White disagrees and dismisses these professors as having too romantic a view of writing as he believes real world writing is demanding and rigorous (104). White goes on to explain that limited freedom is what we desire most, and that some restrictions must apply in order for actions to have meanings. He uses a chess game and planning a trip as two analogies. For example, a chess player is not 'liberated' if allowed to move pieces in any direction with disregard for the rules. We like to be free to travel wherever we like, but do not like freedom from flight schedules, which allows us to manage trips and increases convenience. Likewise, an editor would not appreciate a sonnet (however well written) if the publication needs an assessment of a political speech. White argues that not providing a topic is detrimental and often increases the stress for the students because "the student who is set free from a clear writing assignment must construct one before beginning to write....we liberate students to write well by constructing for them appropriate and unambiguous tasks with clear and understandable goals" (105). A typical practice to solve this problem is for instructors to give students the freedom to choose among various topics or possible questions. However, White contends that it is much fairer to give all students the same topic because question A could be more difficult than question B, which is harder than question C. According to White, different questions are never the same level of difficulty. He believes weaker students gravitate towards the easiest questions and thus appear stronger than they are while the stronger students often

choose the most challenging and appear comparatively weaker. It is preferred to offer the advantages of choice within the same question. White gives an example: “describe an object you value and say why you value it” (106). He believes questions with more than one subject become more difficult to handle and the option to choose between multiple subjects is a trap, insisting that the same question given to all students which can be approached from multiple perspectives is the fairest, most reliable and valid.

Although White focuses on in-class essay questions, many of his ideas can be applied to out of class, untimed writing assignments and I agree giving students ‘total freedom’ often results in confusion on the part of students and shallow, mediocre topics. If ‘total freedom’ is allowed, the instructor should reserve the right to provide guidance to modify the topic. For example, the topic “Why slavery is bad” is weak because the way it is phrased. In a topic such as this, no significant points can be brought against the argument, so it is boring and lifeless. It is extremely difficult to find any new information against slavery or locate scholarly support for slavery in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Therefore, instead of arguing a viable case, the student would simply rehash common knowledge: it is not moral for one person to own another. If no substantial defense can be made against an argument or calling into question the validity of a position, then there is little reason to argue the point. In my most recent class, I had a student choose the topic “Smoking should not be allowed on ASU campus.” According to the Surgeon General and information that has been shared via multi-media for decades, breathing second hand smoke is bad for one’s health. In an effort to stimulate a more interesting argument which could be debatable or called into question, I asked the student how this blanket non-smoking rule could be enforced. Would he hire more security guards and if so,

would he increase tuition to pay their salaries? What would be the punishment for infractions? Immediate dismissal from school? If smoking is so bad, why isn't it illegal? He did not want to entertain any real argumentative questions, but preferred just to easily state his side without engaging the opposing view, which is not effective writing because it does not stimulate thought in the readers' minds. My point is that because my original writing assignment was weak, I received weak essays from students. It is necessary to be aware that effectively responding to student writing begins with formulating effective assignments. As John C. Bean points out, many out of class assignments expect students to give comprehensive information about a topic instead of choosing one area on which to focus. He states, "effective assignments indicate the task, the rhetorical context (including audience and purpose), instruction about length and manuscript form, and a description of your grading criteria" (*Engaging Ideas* 218). Clear assignments prevent problems later, such as unnecessary revisions because the student is not addressing the topic. With a clear starting point, additional revisions can be genuine improvements instead of modifications on an inappropriate paper.

I agree with Frank Smith that the entire education system needs to move away from the Prussian Army model of efficiency that has dominated the 20<sup>th</sup>, and thus far the 21<sup>st</sup>, Century. These overarching problems filter down and are more pronounced in BW classes and exaggerated even more through NNW experiences in BW classes. Smith maintains that current American pedagogical practices are based on studies by Hermann Ebbinghaus who developed a scientific methodology to measure learning (*The Book of Learning and Forgetting* 52). Ebbinghaus postulated that in order to measure whether or not someone has learned, he or she must study nonsense, removing all influences of

previous knowledge or experience. For example, Ebbinghaus created nonsense syllables, such as WUG, DAX or VOG, which makes no sense to English speakers, and measured how long it takes for students to memorize the nonsense, or as I postulate, useless information. Ebbinghaus measured how much time and how much repetition it took for people to learn a list of ten nonsense syllables. Ebbinghaus then locked himself up in a laboratory and tested himself, seeing how long it took him to learn 2,300 nonsensical (and totally useless) items, and returned to the real world with the Laws of Learning, depicted in the following graph taken from page fifty-three of *The Book of Learning and Forgetting*:

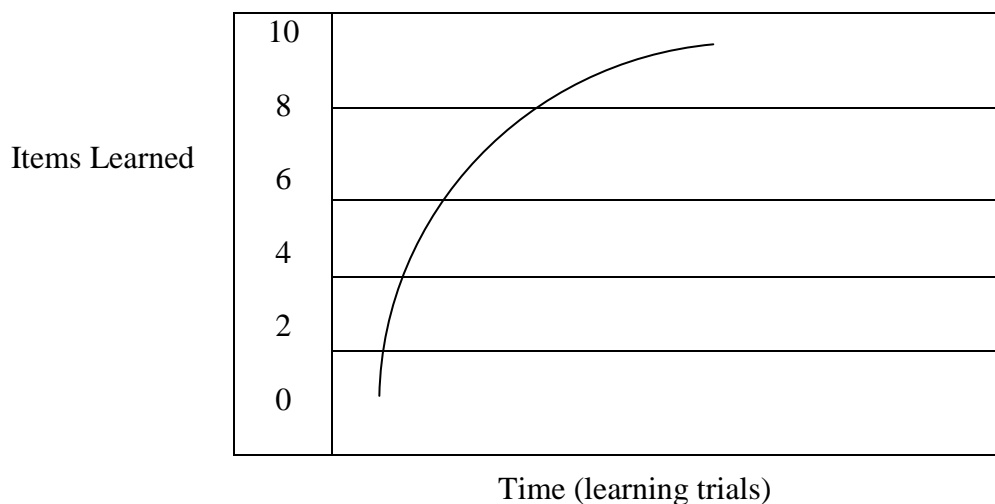


Fig. 3

A key weakness Smith points out with Ebbinghaus' theory is that if any of the items in the Laws of Learning happened to be meaningful so any of the people involved, then the experiment is ruined (53). Unfortunately, the Laws of Learning, and measurements for evaluating students, is based on nonsense, as if students are gerbils to be objectively

manipulated and evaluated, rather than human beings with lived experiences desiring to understand meaningful associations with their worlds.

The Laws of Learning Ebbinghaus developed from this study that is in no way connected to reality was bought hook, line and sinker by the American education system and resulted in the attitude “learning is a matter of effort, and if you don’t learn, you haven’t worked hard or long enough” (54). The No Child Left Behind fiasco is a bastard of Ebbinghaus’ nonsense because it bases education reform on objective standards, not human qualities, and threatens to take money from school systems that do not comply, making teachers *afraid* to fail students or they may lose their jobs. Thus, No Child Left Behind has the opposite of its proposed intended effect and in fact diminishes the quality of education. I perceive current educational theory revolving around the concept that if student numbers (test scores falling in the ‘curve’) cannot be quantified and understandable to computer algorithms, then they are to be tossed and considered invalid and unreliable. Smith believes the education system fell for this nonsense approach to learning due in large part to the success of this method in managing large scale systems effectively in the First World War (46). Unfortunately, what works well for the military is not equally suitable or effective in other aspects of life, such as education.

I have perceived an underlying assumption by some instructors, such as my high school English teachers, that BW have not applied themselves or worked hard enough is why they have been placed in remedial classes. Likewise, I have encountered L2 instructors who state that NNW who are not rigorous enough in acquiring a second language produce sub-standard writing. They just need to work harder and keep their noses to the grindstone. Perhaps the Admissions Office and the rest of academia have the



attitude to put these students into the objectively quantified, highly efficient education system and let it improve them and form them into Standard Issue students. I am not convinced the military model is the best choice because America is a democracy and not a military state. In *Teaching Community*, bell hooks makes an astute observation and distinction that instructors should carry with them into the classroom:

There are tremendous differences in our communities---ethnically, racially, religiously. Diversity suggests the fact of such differences.

Pluralism, on the other hand, is a response to the fact of diversity.

Pluralism is a commitment to communicate with and relate to the larger World. (47)

The problems extend beyond the BW classroom and NNW instructors, but each instructor can make incremental changes within his or her sphere of influence. Regarding more specific concerns, such as how to most effectively respond to NNW in BW classes, instructors should first become aware of the broader educational situation and the reasons behind its methodologies. Then instructors should study CR, theories concerning the Social Epistemic and Expressivist models as well as linguists such as Bakhtin while staying current on the most recent developments by scholars and using their unique identities, integrate, and when necessary modify, these pedagogical practices into their particular classrooms. The first step in responding effectively to NNW in BW classes is to formulate clear, meaningful assignments, followed by substantial non-evaluative feedback that is designed to stimulate thought rather than point out errors. Instructors need to provide sufficient low-stakes, expressive writing, then focus on guiding students

as they develop papers for particular audiences. In order to help NNW in BW classes, it is imperative that they learn to view their writing as readers as well as authors.

Bakhtin's notion of heteroglossia, Berlin's Social Epistemic model and continuing developments in CR complement each other in BW classrooms and can particularly enhance instruction through feedback to NNW. I recommend instructors give NNW surveys, such as Joy Reid's model appearing in Appendix D, during the first week of class in order to first determine whether the NNW is an elective or circumstantial bilingual then determine whether he or she is functional or incipient. In my experience, circumstantial, incipient bilinguals need very different instruction than do the functional, elective ones. I recommend, as does Reid, initially being more directive with incipient bilinguals in order to reduce grammatical errors that interfere with meaning. This is a slow process and often it is difficult to ascertain success over the course of one semester, especially as *every* grammar error or communication breakdown cannot be addressed simultaneously. However, diligent, in-depth attention by the instructor early on will result in less fossilization as the incipient moves into the functional stage. Functional, which tend to also be elective, bilinguals are ready for more challenging writing and my experience has been not to underestimate their abilities or dumb down assignments for them. I recommend having them transliterate, translate and write directly in English in order to compare, contrast and ascertain different nuances between the rhetorics of their own languages and English. Although I do not want to promote the dominant ideology, writing in English, as any language, is heavily influenced by reader expectations and to re-iterate, Shaughnessy correctly states that "readers are buyers in a buyer's market"

(112). I have found students usually understand this analogy and it helps them direct their writing towards desired audiences.

I recommend my Foundations for Written Communication exercise (Appendix G) for any stage of the second language acquisition process because my exercise enhances the appreciation for and interaction with the four primary audiences to which everyone *should* write. As students engage private and shared audiences, they experience the heteroglossic nature of language as well as contrasting rhetorics within English and become more aware of how knowledge and language are socially constructed. Instructors should keep in mind Matsuda's Dynamic Model of L2 Writing (Appendix E) as assignments and syllabi are designed because Matsuda displays in clear, visual terms the degree to which culture and environment influence language and rhetorical structures.

## APPENDIX A

### **Richard Blankenship: Reader Response**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (so if author has questions, knows who to ask)

What is your initial reaction?

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What is the strongest feature of the essay?

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What should be the author's priority for revision?

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Put the focus of the essay in your own words.

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What sections were well developed and which sections require further development?

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Any unnecessary sections?

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Other suggestions.

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Examples of where transitions between paragraphs are used well or where they are not.

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Locate 3 sentences difficult to comprehend. Suggest revisions for these sentences.

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Does the essay have technical or grammatical error? If so, point out.

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APPENDIX B

**Toby Fulwiler: Radical Revision**



Ideally, students bring a piece of writing to class they want to improve.

First, they read & circle one or two things they could elaborate on or make clearer. Then I have them limit the focus, but develop with examples, imagery, or explanations.

Next, students convey the same information as if they are writing a letter to close friend.

Finally, I have them transform the piece of writing into a poem.

I encourage them to practice this Radical Revision on high stakes papers, especially when experiencing writer's block.

The aspects involved in Radical Revision are:

Discovering (Limiting, adding = limit focus while adding material)

Switching (perspective, tense, voice, audience)

Transforming (genre)

## APPENDIX C

### **Valdés Guadalupe: Types of Bilinguals**

<u>Bilingual 1</u>	<u>Incipient Stage</u>	<u>Functional Stage</u>
Adult learner	4 years	Prefers L1 in all domains.
Good access to L2		Functions in L2 in most contexts.

<u>Bilingual 2</u>	<u>Incipient Stage</u>	<u>Functional Stage</u>
Child learner	2 years	Prefers L2 in all domains.
		L1 features reflected in L2.

<u>Bilingual 3</u>	<u>Incipient Stage / Limited Functional Stage</u>
Adult learner	10 years
Limited access to L2	Prefers L1 in all domains.
	Interacts mainly monolingual speakers of L1 or bilinguals speakers.

APPENDIX D

**Joy Reid's Questionnaire for NNW**

1. Is English your second (or third or fourth) language? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

3. List your previous schooling:

In your first language: grade \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Total years \_\_\_\_\_

In English: grade \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_

Total years \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you graduate from a U.S. high school? \_\_\_\_\_

5. If the answer to the last question is

No	Yes
----	-----

TOEFL score \_\_\_\_\_

High school attended \_\_\_\_\_

TOEFL section scores:

Graduated in what year \_\_\_\_\_

Listening \_\_\_\_\_

ESL classes taken \_\_\_\_\_

Written \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ hours each week

Reading \_\_\_\_\_

in grades \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Full time English language study?

Fluency in native language (low,

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

medium, high)

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

Speaking and listening \_\_\_\_\_

How long? \_\_\_\_\_

Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### **Matsuda's Dynamic Model of L2 Writing**

Writer's Background

Language  
Culture  
Education

## APPENDIX F

### **Nancy Welch: Re-Seeing the Argument**



Step 1: Skim through your draft once, quickly, just to get familiar with it again. Then put it aside, out of sight, and in your writer's notebook, jot down in one or two sentences, the argument or assertion that it might be making.

Step 2: Read through your draft again, this time thinking about what moments seem to speak to that argument you jotted down in your notebook. Look too for moments that might extend or complicate your understanding of the argument this draft makes. Set the draft aside and in your notebook try another one or two sentences that extend or complicate your sense of the draft's argument, assertions, persuasive viewpoint.

Step 3: Imagine that you're not the only person who has ever felt this way. What are the other voices, other stories, other arguments or persuasive viewpoints that come to mind when you think about your draft and its argument? Choose one and in your notebook freewrite about its connection to your topic. Choose another and freewrite about its connection.

Step 4: Think about your draft's viewpoint in relation to your own location—gender, class, sexual identity, geography, education, age, and consider: To what extent does your draft try to make visible your location, the different elements of your perspective? What assumptions from your position underwrite your draft and might become more visible?—in order to draw on this perspective or critique its limits. What happens when you think about your draft's argument while thinking about readers who don't share your gender or economic position or age or . . . .? Freewrite from your responses to these questions.

Step 5: Ask about your draft's argument: "What's the opposite case?" or "How might another view also be true?" Ask yourself, "When do I not feel this way?" or "What

situations come to mind that tell me it may be more complicated than this?” From your responses to these questions, freewrite in your notebook.

Step 6: Consider someone who is connected to your draft in some way—a person mentioned directly in the draft or who you can imagine writing this draft from a very different perspective. (If this is tough, imagine yourself at an earlier time or a later time, viewing your draft from a different vantage.) In your notebook, freewrite from that point of view. Take that person, that point of view seriously. Try as best you can (and being mindful of the limits) to understand your draft from another perspective.

Step 7: Imagine someone else reading your draft and then walking away. What should they walk away realizing or considering or feeling? What should they not walk away realizing, thinking, or considering? In your notebook, freewrite from your responses to these questions.

Step 8: Read through your freewriting looking for moments that might extend and complicate or even change your sense of the your draft’s argument. In your notebook jot down another one or two sentences—this time not about the argument your draft is making but the argument you imagine it could make.

APPENDIX G

**Richard Blankenship's Foundations for Written Communication**

Based on video

*Peter Elbow on Writing*

The four audiences writers need to engage:

Private

Shared, but no response

Response, but no evaluation

Full Evaluation

Step 1: For the remainder of class, write privately and spontaneously about anything. It can be personal experience you will later develop in your digital storytelling project, but the point is not to think too much before you write but be spontaneous because no one else will ever see this. You can burn this or feed it to a shredder after you have finished using it to begin Step 2.

Step 2: Take what you have written home, edit and revise so that it becomes something you would not mind others reading. Next class, we will do the ‘shared, no response’ that Elbow talked about in the movie. Everyone will read their papers and your partners will say, “thank you.” If you want, you may improve the writing further before step 3, but changes are not required.

Step 3: The following class, we will do the response, no evaluation as described in the movie.

Step 4: This is what you are used to...turning in to be ‘evaluated’ by the instructor...I would like for you to also turn in Steps 2 and 3 with the final draft typed Times New Roman 12 pt. Font with 1” margins e-mailed to me by\_\_\_\_\_.

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